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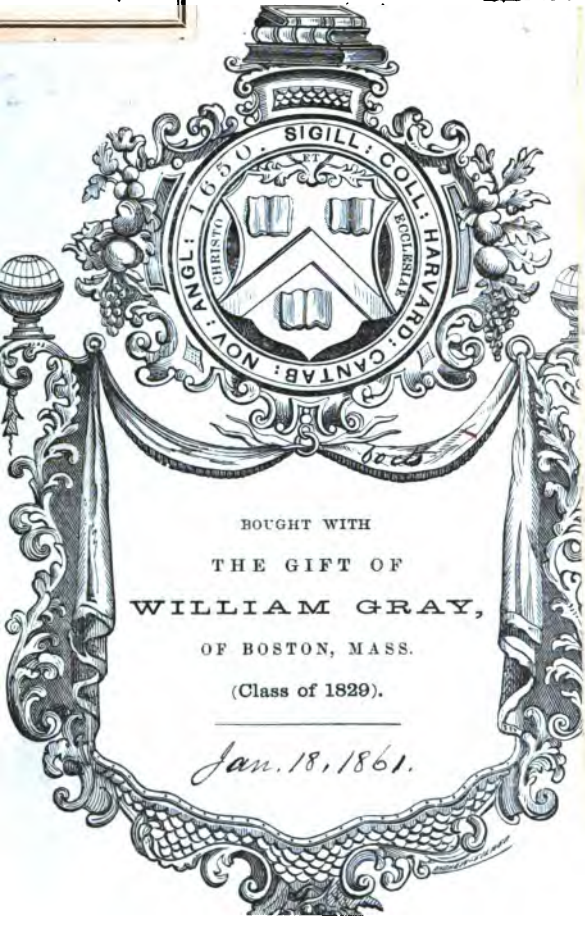

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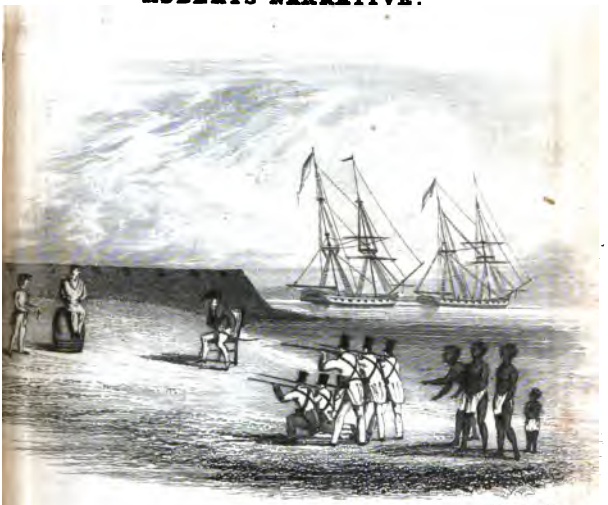

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NARRATIVE

OF

VOYAGES AND EXCURSIONS

ON THE

EAST COAST AND IN THE INTERIOR

CENTRAL AMERICA;

DESCRIBING

A JOURNEY UP THE RIVER SAN JUAN, AND PASSAGE ACROSS THE LAKE OF NICARAGUA TO THE CITY OF LEON:

POINTING OUT THE ADVANTAGES OF A DIRECT COMMERCIAL INTERCOURSE WITH THE NATIVES.

BY ORLANDO W. ROBERTS,

MANY YEARS A RESIDENT TRADER.

WITH NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

BY EDWARD IRVING.

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EARL BATHURST, K. G.

THE PROMOTER OF DISCOVERY

AND ADVOCATE OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

THIS NARRATIVE IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBEDIENT

AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

MR ROBERTS, whose Narrative of Voyages and Adventures is now submitted to the public, went to sea at an early period of life. While a youth in the American merchant service, he visited many parts of India, China, and the Southern Hemisphere. Afterwards he was employed, in the same part of the world, in the squadron under the command of Sir Edward Pellew, now Lord Exmouth; and subsequently, had the good fortune to bring to England the first valuable American ship captured in the South Sea,—dexterously eluding, on that occasion, the pursuit of the American frigate Essex in the Pacific, and baffling, after a long chase in the English Channel, that scourge of the British merchantmen, the True Yankey privateer. Latterly, he was in the command of several valuable merchant vessels; and possesses many documents bear-

ing testimony to his good conduct and ability as a navigator. The reasons which induced him to visit the West Indies, and to remain for several years, among the Indians on the East Coast of Central America, in the capacity of a trader, are developed in the course of the narrative.

On returning to his native country Mr Roberts was applied to by many highly respectable individuals, proposing, at that speculative period, to carry on certain operations in Central America and on the Isthmus of Darien, for information regarding the present state of that coast, and the dispositions of the native free tribes; he found, with considerable surprise, that extreme ignorance was not only prevalent on these subjects, but that the topography and real state, of the greater part of that country, especially of many of the important places on the Mosquito Shore, the coast of the Isthmus of Darien, and the Interior, which he had recently visited, were scarcely known.

These circumstances first encouraged him to arrange his materials for the present narrative, which, although in some points deficient, will contribute towards the great mass of valuable information lately diffused regarding the actual state of the New World; in other respects, it will perhaps not be found unamusing.

By his education, and former visits to

various parts of the world, Mr Roberts had not only been divested of many prejudices and feelings, which would have disqualified some Europeans, from associating with Indians and conforming to their mode of life; but he had early acquired those habits of observation, and that talent for investigation, which qualified him for giving a fair account of their progress towards a state of civilization.

In contemplating the increasing numbers or present state of the Kharibees, and descendents of those British slaves who remained on the Mosquito Shore when the English left it, we are enabled to draw inferences, very opposite to those of such advocates for the continuance of slavery, who assert that, under the present West India system, the majority of the slaves are more happy, and better provided with the means of subsistence, than they would be if gradually manumitted, and placed in a state of freedom, dependent only on their own exertions; for, it appears that the persons first alluded to, are not only increasing in numbers, but are, by their own industry, amply provided with all the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life.

It is perhaps unnecessary to state, in detail, the rapid progress of those discoveries which Columbus had the glory of commencing; yet it may not be deemed improper, or irrelevant to the subject of the following

narrative, briefly to notice so much of them as relate to the ancient inhabitants of the East Coast of Central America, and the first attempts made by himself and his successors, to subjugate those Indian tribes whose descendents have been so recently visited, and described by the author.

Columbus having, in the year 1492, reached some of the Lucays, or Bahama Islands, proceeded to Cuba, where the natives gave him such information, as induced him to direct his course towards Hayti, (Hispaniola, or St Domingo), at which island he arrived on the 6th December.

We may here, however transiently, contemplate the delightful picture presented by Columbus's first account of the appearance, happy state, and good conduct of the harmless natives; we could dwell, with pleasure, on their humane and generous conduct to that leader and his adventurous band, when in consequence of the wreck of their principal vessel, they were involved in misfortune and difficulty. * But

* "As soon as the Islanders heard of this disaster they crowded to the shore with their Prince Guacanahari at their head. Instead of taking advantage of the distress in which they beheld the Spaniards, to attempt any thing to their detriment, they lamented their misfortune with tears of sincere condolence,—not satisfied with this unavailing expression of their sympathy, they put to sea a number of canoes, and, under the direction of the Spaniards, assisted in saving whatever could be got out of the wreck, and by the united labour of so many hands, almost every thing of

it is painful to be obliged to turn immediately to the dark scene which followed, and behold the sad change, which the arrival of these licentious and rapacious strangers, was destined to create among a million of innocent people; for in the short space of fifteen years, they were reduced to a wretched remnant, consisting of scarcely sixty thousand miserable and heart-broken slaves; and even these, were continually wasting by labour and misery; so that, in a few years more, they found their only refuge in a premature grave!

On his second voyage, in 1493, Columbus discovered, what are now called the Leeward Islands, inhabited by a very different race of men, who fiercely defended themselves, and made daring attacks upon their invaders.

The third voyage took place in the year 1498; he then discovered the Island now called Trinidad, and the Continent of South America; but, after proceeding some dis-

value was carried ashore. As fast as the goods were landed, Guacanahari in person took charge of them. By his orders they were all deposited in one place, and armed sentinels were posted, who kept the multitude at a distance in order to prevent them not only from embezzling, but from inspecting too curiously what belonged to their guests. Next morning this Prince visited Columbus, who was now on board the Nigra, and endeavoured to console him for his loss, by offering all that he possessed to repair it."—*Robertson's History of America.*

tance, along that coast, to the westward, he bore away for Saint Domingo; and, it was not until his last unhappy voyage, in the year 1502, undertaken in the hope of finding some strait leading to the then undiscovered South Sea, that he first explored the East Coast, a description of which, and its inhabitants, is the principal subject of the following narrative.

At Guanaja, an island in the Gulf of Honduras, Columbus first had an interview with the natives of the Mainland. Proceeding to Cape Gracias a Dios, he examined the coast southward from thence to Porto Bello. He attempted to establish a small colony on the River Belem, but had there to contend not only against a more warlike race of people than those of Hayti, but also against the insubordination of his insolent and rapacious followers, and was thus deprived of the honour of planting the first European settlement on the Continent of America.

About ten years afterwards, the King of Spain having allotted the coast between the Gulf of Darien and Cape de Vela, to Alonso de Ojeda, and from thence to Cape Gracias a Dios, to Diego de Nicuessa, both these leaders made preparations for colonizing and securing their new possessions,—the former supported by a force of three hundred, and the latter by seven hundred and eighty men. But not being able to make

the natives comprehend by what right or title a foreign priest could dispose of their country, to a king of whom they knew nothing, they not only refused to listen to the Spaniards, or to admit them to settle in their country, but, being attacked, they defended themselves with such resolute bravery, that, notwithstanding the most courageous and persevering efforts, and repeated reinforcements, the Spaniards, with the loss of half their numbers, were compelled to abandon the enterprise. Cortes, Pizzaro and Balboa, commanders afterwards so celebrated, were among the number of volunteers; but the former, destined for a higher and more successful undertaking, was compelled by sickness to remain at St Domingo. The form which, according to Herrera, was to be observed in taking possession of this country, is too important to be omitted in the present work.*

After a lapse of above three centuries, and the extirpation or conquest, of nearly the whole of the ancient population, it is not only deeply interesting in a physiological point of view, but matter of exultation to every liberal mind, to mark the result of this determined and successful resistance; and we still trace with satisfaction, in the undegenerated San Blas men, Valientes, and other free Indians of the present day, the same feelings and sentiments of inde-

* Note, No. 1.

pendence which animated their courageous ancestors. Farther to the northward we find, in Clementi, a specimen of the ancient Cazique, and in his hill-people, a modification of the more mild and peaceable of the ancient tribes. We can also trace, although under greater modifications, a remnant of the fierce natives of the Leeward Islands, in the resolute free Kharibees † of the Bay of Honduras, and Mosquito Shore, much softened down however, by their intercourse with Europeans, and by a slight intermixture with negroes.

Balboa, by his successful expedition across the Isthmus of Darien, in the year 1512, attracted a great number of adventurers to that part of the continent, under the command of Pedrarias, who, being either unwilling, or unable, to restrain them from the most cruel and tyrannical exactions, the natives inhabiting the country towards the Lake of Nicaragua were almost totally extirpated; and the removal, shortly afterwards, of the Spaniards from Santa Maria on the Gulf of Darien to Panama on the side of the Pacific, completed the subjugation of most of the neighbouring tribes, and opened the way, not only for the future conquerors of Peru, but also for the discovery of the provinces of Nicaragua by Davila in 1522, and the sub-

† Caraibé, in their original language, is said to signify "warlike people."

sequent foundation of the cities of Cartago, Leon, Nicaragua and Granada. Cortes having, in the mean time, conquered Mexico, sent De Oli and others, in 1523, to what is now denominated the province of Honduras; and, during the same year, he commissioned Pedro Alvarado, with considerable forces to take possession of Guatemala; so that the Indians of the Central States, were at once assailed both from the north and south.

Alvarado, a brave, politic, and indefatigable soldier, after subduing the natives of Pegnantepec, and completing the conquest of Soconusco and Ponala, arrived in the territory of Quichee; and, after many desperate battles with the natives—the Rachiquels, and other powerful and warlike nations—founded the city of Guatemala in the year 1524. To enter into an account of the brave defence made by many of these nations, and to trace the progress of the Spanish arms, would lead us into details which, although possessing great interest, are rather foreign to the subject of the following narrative. We must therefore rest contented by observing, that as the Spaniards approached the Mosquito Shore, and the mountainous country between that coast and the Pacific, the determined resistance of the natives, and their aversion to the Spanish yoke, seems to have increased. In the province of Honduras, nearly the whole of which is still possessed

by the aborigines, the Caziques Copan Calel in 1530, and Lempira in 1536, seem to have defended themselves with a courage and conduct which would have done honour to more enlightened warriors; and although they ultimately submitted, many of their subjects, as well as those, who had been some time before, driven from St Salvador, by Estete and other sanguinary and avaricious Spanish commanders, sought refuge in the mountains, and in the labyrinths of the coast, handing down to their posterity, that hatred of the Spanish name, which is so carefully cherished even at the present day. The Spaniards seem, from this period, to have given up the idea of pushing their conquests in that quarter; but, in the year 1608, according to the historian Vasques, attempts were made, by *missionaries*, to convert and bring the Indians on the north and east coast to acknowledge the Spanish yoke. These missionaries sought the tribes living among the mountains on the upper part of the Bluefields River, and were at first kindly received; but, afterwards, narrowly escaped to Guatemala with their lives. A second expedition, in 1612, escorted by 25 soldiers, was sacrificed in the same quarter by these unruly Neophytes.

In the year 1623, other missionaries visited the country farther to the northward, and, at first, seem to have had hopes of success; but, ultimately, they also, fell a sacrifice to their

zeal. These seem to be the last serious attempts of the Spaniards, in that quarter, to subjugate the free natives, whose early intercourse with the English and other Europeans, especially the Buccaniers, continually at war with the Spaniards, aided them in maintaining their independence. The friendly intercourse which continued to subsist during the period that the British had settlements on their coast, has strengthened their good opinion, and taught them to rely on us for that protection which it is hoped the British Government will promptly extend to them, should any future emergency render our interference necessary for their preservation.

EDWARD IRVING.

LONDON, APRIL 1827.

VOYAGES AND ADVENTURES

ON THE

EAST COAST, AND IN THE INTERIOR OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

WANT OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE EAST COAST, AND INTERIOR—INARRAS' IMPERFECT HISTORY—INFLUENCE OF THE ROMISH CHURCH INEFFECTUAL IN CIVILIZING THE INDIANS—FORMER COMPARED WITH THEIR PRESENT STATE—PROGRESS OF THE LATE REVOLUTION—THE AUTHOR'S OPPORTUNITIES OF INFORMATION.

ALTHOUGH much valuable information has lately appeared relative to South America, no European traveller has, since the Spanish American revolution, given any account of the country situated between Mexico and Colombia, forming the

Indian territory, and the *United Provinces of Central America*, nor of the numerous tribes of free Indians in that part of the world, who continue to detest the Spanish name, and will not admit one of that nation to settle among them. This may in some measure be attributed to the wilful silence of the West Indian traders, who are little inclined to spread information likely to produce competitors for a share of their lucrative trade; and partly to the want of free access from the East Coast to the interior. It may also be partly owing to some remains of the old Spanish jealousy of strangers—to the comparatively late period at which the Central Provinces ventured to declare their independence, and the difficulties incident to the first formation of a new government; but, however this may be, we are still obliged to look for information regarding this part of America to the Buccaneers of some centuries past.

A "Statistical and Commercial History of Guatémala" has indeed appeared, * translated from the Spanish of Don Domingo Inarras, a native of New Guatémala; but, although that work contains much valuable information, it is, for the most part, a compilation of ancient records, and, consequently, not of a nature to satisfy the British public; or, what in this country is always an important point, to guide commercial men in extending their relations. Moreover, Inarras does not seem to know any thing of the Lake of Nicaragua, or the Rio de San Juan; or to have the least knowledge of the Indian country and settlements

* Translated by Lieut. Bailey, R. N. Printed for Hearne, London, 1823.

on the East Coast, although these occupy above one half of Central America.

It has been considered by many, especially by those attached to the Romish church, that the exertions of the Catholic clergy, for humanizing the Indians of Central America, have been eminently successful; and that, bringing them within the pale of the church, has ameliorated their condition, expanded their mental and corporeal powers, and, consequently, added to their earthly comfort and happiness. But when we come dispassionately to examine and consider their actual state at the present time, in comparison to what it was reported, even by the Spaniards, to have been at the period of the Conquest, there is too much reason to fear we would find ourselves obliged to pause before adopting that opinion. When we also compare the state of the great majority of the aborigines of the present day, with that of the descendants of those brave tribes who sought shelter on the coast, or defended their possessions there, it becomes a matter of doubt, whether the latter have not, under the tuition of lawless Buccaneers, and licentious free traders, made greater progress in the scale of humanity, or, at all events, retained more of their ancient, moral and physical strength, than the descendants of their less resolute brethren of the Central States, who have enjoyed the tuition of the Roman Catholic priesthood. In considering this question, however, it is not altogether to the peculiar influence which the dogmas of that church are alleged to exercise over the minds of the lower orders, by keeping them in slavish subjection to the declared infallibility of its doctrines, that we must look for an ex-

planation of this circumstance; for it may also be considered as furnishing a proof, if any were necessary, how much more capable of mental exertion are men in a state of freedom, than those who are retained in a state of slavery.

According to the Historians of the Conquest of Guatemala, that country, when first invaded by the Spaniards, under Don Pedro Alvarado, was flourishing and populous, to a degree which, compared with the present small numbers, and wretched condition of the aborigines, leads the mind to reflect, with astonishment and abhorrence, upon the massacres, cruelties and privations, by which their intrepid, but bigoted and relentless conquerors, reduced the natives to their present state; for, instead of an uncultivated and not half peopled country, containing, as at the present day, two or three poor cities, towns and villages, inhabited by a few thousands of Spanish *religieuse* and Creole descendants of Spanish adventurers, with groups of naked and degraded Indians scattered over the face of the country, living in filth and idleness, under the shelter of wretched huts, or travelling in droves, loaded like beasts of burden, on the one hand,—and a comparatively small number of free and independent tribes, remnants of former kingdoms, speaking different languages, scattered along the sea-coast, or among the mountains, on the other—we, at the time of the first invasion, read of no less than *thirty different nations* of Indians in Central America, congregated in wealthy cities, in a state of prosperity and civilization, their kings and chiefs possessing sumptuous palaces and houses, great riches, and all the apparatus of regular go-

vernments. * According to Torquemada, and the historian Fuentes, one of these ancient cities, namely, *Utatlan*, the capital of the king of *Quiché*, was, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, so considerable, that it contained a population probably equal in number to the whole present Indians of Central America; for, to oppose the Spaniards, it alone produced seventy-two thousand fighting men; and, in proof of its progress in civilization, one of its institutions was a seminary where, under seventy or eighty tutors, five or six thousand youths were maintained and educated at the king's expense.

* It is asserted that the Central American Indians of the present day still use twenty-six of the ancient languages, viz. Quiché, Kachiquel, Zutugel, Mam, Pocomam, Pipil, or Nahuate, Pupuluca, Sinca, Mexican, Chorti, Alaquilac, Caichi, Poconchi, Ixil, Zotzil, Pzendal, Chapaneca, Zoque, Coxoh, Chaniabal, Chol, Uzpanteca, Lenca, Aquacateca, Maya, and Quecchi.

The dress that the noble Indians wore was of white cotton dyed or stained with different colours, the use of which was prohibited to the other ranks. This vestment consisted of a shirt and white breeches, decorated with fringes; over these was drawn another pair of breeches, reaching to the knees, and ornamented with a species of embroidery. The legs were bare; the feet protected by sandals, fastened over the instep, and at the heel by thongs of leather; the sleeves of the shirt were looped above the elbow with a blue or red band; the hair was worn long, and tressed behind with a cord of the colour used upon the sleeves, and terminating in a tassel, which was a distinction peculiar to the great captains; the waist was girded by piece of cloth of various colours, fastened in a knot before; over the shoulders was thrown a white mantle, ornamented with figures of birds, lions, and other decorations of cords and fringe. The ears and lower lip were pierced to receive star-shaped pendants of gold or silver. The insignia of office, or dignity, were carried in the hand.—*Inarras*, pp. 193 and 198.

The present town of *Santa Cruz del Quiche* is said to be founded upon, or near the place where it stood; but so complete has been the destruction of all the remains of former greatness in this part of the world, that the site of many ancient cities, nearly equal in extent to the one mentioned, cannot now be traced, or with any degree of certainty pointed out.

Having, in consequence of the great stagnation in the shipping interests prevalent in the year 1815, visited the Western World, I resided upwards of seven years among the *free* tribes scattered along the East Coast, and during that period traded at every settlement between the Gulf of Darien and the Bay of Honduras; and, in the course of that time, had a good opportunity of observing, and becoming well acquainted with the manners and customs of these people, and of contrasting their present state of civilization, with that of their subjugated brethren, in the Spanish American provinces. How far the late political changes, in that part of the world, will be likely to benefit both, or either of these classes of aborigines, appears exceedingly doubtful, especially while the new states continue, under the influence of a church, whose interests are best maintained, by keeping the great body of the people in a state of ignorance; but, that they may ultimately be raised from their present state of abject degradation, is ardently to be wished by every friend of humanity.

It is necessary to observe, that symptoms of discontent appeared in Venezuela; and the foundation of the Spanish American revolution was established there, so early as about the year 1797.

The expedition of the unfortunate Miranda, took place in 1806, and a sanguinary war raged in 1815, while, at the same time, Mexico had become the scene of ferocious contests; yet the southern part of the kingdom or domain of Guatémala, remained comparatively tranquil, until a much later period; for, it will be perceived in the course of the following narrative, that, so late as the year 1822, when I crossed the Lake of Nicaragua to the city of Leon, the Spanish authorities were, notwithstanding the declaration of independence, and various revolutionary movements in the *city* of Guatémala in 1820, still in undisturbed possession of the government of that part of Central America; yet it was evident, that the mass of the population there, was adverse to the continuance of the Spanish yoke, and they have since joined in throwing it off.

So many writers on the subject of America and the West Indies, have given minute and scientific descriptions, of the various plants, birds and animals, found in that part of the world, that even if I had been capable of entering into proper details on the subject, I should only have wearied the patience of the general reader, without gratifying the lover of natural history, by an exact account of new productions. I shall, therefore, notice only such of the plants, animals, and fishes, as appeared to be of importance, either in a commercial or some other point of view.

In speaking of the residences of the natives, I shall, according to the custom prevalent on the East Coast, and in the West Indies, use, in the course of the following narrative, the terms *settlement* and plantation, although not, perhaps, the

most proper designation for the abodes of aborigines; and, at the same time, I shall write the proper names, as nearly as possible, according to the most prevalent pronunciation.

CHAPTER II.

VOYAGE TO THE BAY OF MANDINGO—NATIVES —TRADE, &c.—SARSADEE—NEW CALEDONIA AND SCOTCH DARIEN COMPANY—SAN BLAS INDIANS—THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS—THEIR ENMITY TO THE SPANIARDS—WOMEN —SOOKEAH MEN—RIVERS—FORESTS—GAME—FISH, &c.—TURTLE—TORTOISE-SHELL, &c.

ARRIVING at Kingston, Jamaica, in the early part of the year 1816, I shortly afterwards obtained the command of a brig of about one hundred and sixty tons burthen, with an assorted cargo of no great value, but suitable to the Indian trade.

We left Port Royal, Jamaica, in the month of July, and, on the fourth day, we saw the high land at the back of the Bay of Mandingo, between Porto Bello and the Gulf of Darien. Next morning, we anchored on the lee-side of one of the numerous kays, that are off its entrance, and we shortly perceived a canoe, with two Indians, coming cautiously round the point. On our hoisting the British ensign, they approached the brig, and hailed us; to which my assistant, who understood their language, replied, that we were English traders from Jamaica. On being made acquainted with the object of our voyage, they recommended

us to proceed, in the first instance, to Great Playone River, as the most commodious place for loading the brig, and procuring a cargo with the greatest despatch. They shortly left us, but returned in the evening, accompanied by several canoes and dories, * from the shore, bringing plantains, bananas, cocoa-nuts, cassava, hogs, fowls, and turtle; in exchange for which, we gave them fish-hooks, small glass beads, Dutch looking-glasses, salt, and other articles, which, except to them, were of very trifling value. Our crew, in the mean time, put out their fishing-lines, and soon caught plenty of groupers, red and silver snappers, stone bass, and a variety of other fish, so that we had abundance of excellent provisions.

Having thus apprised the Indians of our arrival on the coast, we next day got under weigh, and ran down the inner passage, between the small kays or islands, and the mainland. This passage is full of coral rocks and reefs, but the water is so clear, that they are easily seen and avoided in the daytime, by keeping a man stationed at the mast-head, on the look out, to give warning of the vessel's approach to them. At night, however, this inner passage, the whole distance from Mandingo to Caret, is totally impracticable.

Between these points, are the mouths of many considerable rivers, the sources of which, are altogether unknown, even to the Spaniards, being situated in the heart of a country, occupied by hostile tribes of Indians, who have always maintained their independence. Some of these rivers are said to rise within a short distance of the Pacific Ocean,

* A kind of large boat, made out of the trunk of a tree.

but no authentic survey of any of them, has yet been made.

In the evening, we came to an anchor off the river Daablo; and, according to custom, fired a gun as a signal to the Indians, whose chief settlements are situated on the banks of the rivers, a considerable way up from the sea. The report of even a six-pounder on this coast, is heard an immense way up the country; but it is only the acute ear of an Indian, that can distinguish between its reverberations among the mountains, and the more frequent sound of distant thunder. On hearing this signal-gun, canoes are immediately despatched, for the purpose of ascertaining the object of such a visit. Sometimes they arrive the same evening, but at all times not later than next morning.

Numbers of the Indians came off to the brig next morning, and expressed much satisfaction at seeing a vessel of the Clara's unusual size, visiting their coast for the purposes of trade. We proceeded, by their recommendation, to Needle Kay, being the most eligible place for collecting fustic, which we intended should be the most bulky, although the least valuable part of our cargo. We were shortly visited by the chiefs, and by the Sookeah man, priest, or conjurer, of the great and little Playone tribes, who promised us all the assistance in their power. By their advice we hired a few Indians, who very expeditiously erected a temporary house for us, on the kay, in which we had more room to display our commodities to advantage, than we could have had in the vessel. In two or three days, we landed and arranged the goods we had to offer, cleared a spot for the reception of fustic, which the Indians had

gone to collect at their different settlements, and every thing augured favourably for the success of our voyage. The Indians, shortly began to arrive from all parts of the coast, with fustic, in canoes and dories; some of them brought from five hundred weight, up to three, four or five tons, but none of them exceeding the latter quantity. In exchange, we gave them ravenduck, osnaburg, checks, blue baftas, and other manufactured goods—mosschettes, (or G. R. cutlass-blades), and a variety of toys and small articles, adapted to this trade, for which articles, in barter, an enormous price was obtained. Hogs, fowls, and an abundant variety of provisions and fruits, were brought from various rivers, and sold to us at a very trifling consideration. The hogs, I may here remark, were turned loose on the kay, during the day-time, to seek for food; but, at night, either from habit, or an instinctive fear of wild beasts, they invariably kept crowded together, in a body, close to our house.

Being desirous of procuring, as much tortoise-shell and cocoa as possible, we fitted out two large boats, by the Spaniards called bongos, for an excursion along the coast, putting a few goods on board, and procuring the assistance of an Indian trader, who partially understood the English language. Being anxious to become acquainted with the coast, as far as I safely could, I took charge of this expedition: we slept the first night, at a small settlement, on the banks of the river Banana, where we bartered some trifling articles for tortoise-shell. From thence, we proceeded to the river Mosquito, where there is a considerable settlement of Indians; but here, we could do no business, as

they had agreed to keep the whole of the tortoise-shell, which is of the finest quality, for the established traders in the employment of Shepherd and Humphries of Jamaica, who have had persons stationed at this place, for some years past.

The Indians here, are particularly favourable to the English, and have long adopted the British flag; from the month of April to October, which is the fishing season, it is regularly hoisted every morning, at the house of the chief or head man.

From Banana we proceeded, farther along the coast, towards the Gulf of Darien, to Samadee, another considerable station of the Indians, where we purchased a few hundred weights of tortoise-shell, and a quantity of cocoa. The natives here, raise abundance of plantains, bananas, maize, cassava, and all the other productions of this prolific climate; —abundance of the finest green turtle are caught close to the settlement; vessels, trading to San Blas, also find here an excellent harbour, and a greater variety of refreshments than they can possibly consume.

We next visited New Caledonia, the site of the settlement attempted to be formed, by the famous Scotch Darien Company, in the years 1698 and 1699. The ruins of the fort and houses, are still very visible; the harbour is excellent, and there seems to be no want of provisions in the country, in the rivers, and in the sea. Had this magnificent project been properly seconded, or not injudiciously opposed, by the English nation and King William's Dutch subjects, the result might, at the present day, in spite of the opposition of Spain, have been glorious to England, eclipsing

the splendour of the other great schemes of the Bank of England and the East India Company, also established about that time;—whose directors were eminently indebted to its projector, the ill-requited Patterson, for many of those ideas, in which have originated, the present prosperity and power, of those great national corporations.

As the particulars of this extraordinary but unfortunate man's favourite scheme, are now almost forgotten, it may not be improper, in this narrative, to give a brief sketch of it, taken principally from the writings of an author who had access to the papers of the Company, "some of which are preserved in the Advocates Library in Edinburgh, and others in the Exchequer there; and to the family papers, of many who were the chief actors in the Company's affairs." *

Patterson, the son of a farmer in Dumfriesshire in Scotland, was educated for the church, and first visited the Western world under pretence of converting the Indians; he was acquainted with Wafer and Dampier, but got most of his information from the old Buccaneers. At Acta, between Porto-Bello and Carthagena, towards the Gulf of Darien, he found a natural harbour, capable of containing a large fleet, and having a promontory commanding its entrance. At first, Patterson offered his plans to merchants in London, who discouraged him; afterwards to others on the continent of Europe, who also treated him illiberally.

* Dalrymple, Memoirs of his own times. The reader will find, also, many interesting particulars regarding this ill-fated expedition, in a work lately edited by the Rev. Dr M'Crie, intituled "Memoirs of Mr William Veitch and George Brysson, written by themselves, &c. Edinburgh, 1825, 8vo, pp. 222—251

The Elector of Brandenburgh listened to him, but afterwards would do nothing. At last the sanguine and energetic Fletcher of Salton, brought him forward, and introduced him to the Marquis of Tweeddale. The Master of Stair and Mr Johnston, the two secretaries of State, for Scotland, also patronized him; and, through the means of the friends thus procured, a statute of Parliament was passed, in the year 1695, and in terms thereof, a charter from the crown obtained, for creating a trading company to Africa and the New World, granting "power to plant colonies and build forts, with consent of the inhabitants, in places not possessed by any European nations."

A subscription opened, and four hundred thousand pounds, a great sum at that period, was instantly subscribed. Patterson's project, which had been timidly considered "by people in private, filled them with hope when it came to them on the wings of public fame."* Two or three respectable individuals being deputed to receive subscriptions in England, and on the Continent—the English subscribed 300,000*l.*, and the Dutch and Hamburghers 200,000*l.* more. Patterson was to have received for his remuneration two per cent. on the stock, and three per cent. on the profits; but when he saw the magnitude of the subscription, in the generous spirit which belongs to genius, he gave a free discharge of his claims.

In the meantime the jealousy of trade, "which has done more mischief to the trade of England than all other causes put together," created an alarm in England; and Parliament, without any

* Dalrymple's Memoirs.

consideration, petitioned the King against it, on the 13th December 1695, as detrimental to the new East India Company. No committee of Parliament, or inquiry, was instituted; the King was induced to set his face against it, and the English and Hamburghers immediately withdrew their subscriptions.

The Scotch, however, persevered, and boldly defended their rights. They built six ships in Holland, of from thirty-six to sixty guns each—and on the 26th July 1698, twelve hundred men sailed from Leith in five stout ships; and although these men could have forcibly gone from the northmost part of Mexico to the southmost of Chili," they used no force with the natives, but, in all their transactions, acted fairly and honourably in every respect; and their first act, which originated in the advice of Patterson, was to proclaim *freedom of trade and religion to all nations!*

The Colonists, in their first letter to the Council of Directors, represent, that "As to the country, we find it very healthy; for although we arrived here in the rainy season, from which we had little or no shelter for several weeks together, and many sick among us, yet they are so far recovered, and in so good a state of health, as could hardly be expected any where among such a number of men together." A variety of papers of the Company, in the Advocates Library, prove that the soil was good, the climate healthy, and the passage from sea to sea not difficult.

The colonists lingered eight months, looking in vain for that assistance from Scotland, which the difficulties thrown in the way of the Company's operations prevented being sent; and falling short

of provisions, although the Indians, by hunting and fishing for them, generously gave them that temporary relief which fellow Britons refused, almost all of them quitted the settlement.

In the mean time, the active enmity of the Spaniards, and other enemies of the Company, provoked the Scotch to send out a reinforcement of thirteen hundred men; but this expedition was hastily got up, and ill provisioned. They arrived at different times, broken in health, and dispirited at the situation in which they found the settlement; to add to their misfortunes, it has been said, that certain gloomy and bigoted preachers exhausted the spirits of the people, and spread divisions and discontent amongst them. In the mean time, the most active and inveterate enmity and opposition to the Company continued to show itself in England.

The last party from Scotland that joined the second colony, after it had been three months settled, was Captain Campbell of Finab, with a company of the people of his own estate, whom he had commanded in Flanders. This brave gentleman marched to Fubucantee the second day after his arrival, and, with two hundred men, attacked and defeated, with great slaughter, a Spanish force of sixteen hundred men, which had been collected to destroy the colony. On the fifth day he returned to the fort with very little loss, but found eleven Spanish ships blockading the harbour, their troops landed, and almost all hope of help or provisions cut off. He stood a siege of six weeks, till the enemy, by their approaches, cut off his wells; and the garrison, after melting even their

pewter dishes into bullets, were forced to capitulate on honourable terms. Many misfortunes befel them on their way home; the Spaniards showed them generous kindness, while the English treated them with the most inveterate enmity and malice.

The whole were completely dispersed, and only Captain Campbell's, and another small ship, with about thirty men of the whole colony, returned to Scotland, where they found Patterson labouring for the reestablishment of the Company's affairs. He survived many years in Scotland, pitied and neglected, but always respected.

England, by the imprudence of causing the ruin of that settlement, lost the opportunity of securing to herself, greater commercial power, than will probably ever again present itself, to any nation whatsoever. There are times, when schemes the most visionary, may succeed; and if Spain and England had, at that time, joined in opening a passage through the Isthmus of Darien, the situation of the former, might at the present day, have been very different; and the efforts of these ill-informed and inadequate companies, which have recently been got up, in various quarters, for the purpose of effecting a junction canal, between the two great oceans, would have been rendered unnecessary; efforts which now can hardly succeed, unless heartily seconded, and powerfully patronized, by all the leading nations of Europe and America.

Having made several later voyages to San Blas in the Clara, I had good opportunity of inquiring into the manners and customs of the natives of this Isthmus, who appear to be a distinct race of people from the Valiente and other Indians of the

Rio Belling, Chirico Mola, Chiriqui, and other places to the northward. They are much shorter in stature, few of them exceeding five feet two or three inches in height; but they have full chests, broad shoulders, and are exceedingly active; their foreheads are low, and rather flat; their eyes small, and generally of a black or dark brown colour; their cheek bones broad and full; the lips not very thick. They suffer the hair on their heads, which is coarse, black, and often worn tied behind the head, or in queue, to grow to a great length; but they carefully eradicate it from all other parts of the body. The colour of their skin is a dusky yellow, peculiar to the inhabitants of this part of America. There are some instances of Albinos being produced amongst them; and in one of my voyages to the Darien Gulf, I saw, at the River Coco, a child of about five years or "seasons," old, perfectly white, but without any apparent defect in its sight, as the Albinos are generally represented to have. The San Blas men are an active hardy race of people, extremely jealous of their independence, which they have hitherto strenuously maintained; and, what is not very common among the other Indians of South America, they are fond and careful of their women. Some of these ladies accompanied their chiefs on board the vessel. They were clothed in wrappers of blue baftas, or stripped cotton of their own manufacture, reaching from the breast to a little lower than the calf of the leg. They wore a profusion of small glass beads round their ankles, forming a band of from two to three and a half inches deep, and similar bands or bracelets were worked round the wrists. Their ears were pierced, as well as the cartilage of

the nose, in which they wore rings of gold or silver; the ear-rings principally supplied by the Jamaica traders—the nose jewels seem to be of their own manufacture, being a thick ring of gold in the form of an obtuse triangle, about three quarters of an inch in circumference. On their necks, they wore an immense quantity of fine seed beads of lively colours, and necklaces of red coral. Some of those worn by the chiefmens wives, would alone weigh several pounds. Their hair, which is very long and black, was made up not inelegantly, and fastened on the top of the head with a sort of bodkin made of tortoise-shell, or hard wood. Their complexion is much clearer and brighter than that of the men. Over the head was thrown a piece of blue bafta or sahempore, completely covering the back, breasts, and one side of the face. Altogether, the deportment of these women was extremely modest, diffident, and amiable. Their husbands are exceedingly jealous of strangers, and that is said to be one of their reasons for refusing to allow Europeans to settle on the mainland. Their trading intercourse is always carried on at one of the numerous kays or islands on the coast, selected at the time for that purpose. Perhaps this custom, may in some measure be owing to the necessity which they are under, of guarding with great vigilance, against their neighbours the Spaniards, to whom they bear the most inveterate enmity. No Spanish vessel ever fell into their power, whose crew was permitted to escape, when any of them have the misfortune to suffer shipwreck on this part of the coast,—the massacre of the crew is, under every circumstance, the inevitable consequence. During one of my subse-

quent trading voyages to this quarter, a fine Spanish copper-bottomed schooner, of about one hundred and twenty tons burden, laden with wine, rice, maize, sugar, bricks, and jerked beef, ran aground during the night, on a reef of rocks, a little to the north-east of the great Playone river. The crew, knowing the inevitable consequence of being discovered in the morning, took to their boats during the night, and reached Porto Bello. The vessel being strong, and substantially built, beat fairly over the reef, without suffering much damage. The Indians, immediately on discovering the accident, boarded and plundered her, cutting away the masts, bowsprit, &c., for the mere purpose of securing the iron works, by rendering her useless. They regretted that the crew had made their escape. The hull of the vessel was afterwards removed to Needle Kay, and I used it as a hulk, by which to heave down a vessel, under my command.

It is to be regretted that this part of the Isthmus is still so little known. I have been assured by many intelligent Indians, worthy of confidence, that one of the rivers on which they are settled, has its source in a kind of lake, or lagoon, within only about eight miles of the Pacific. The forests of Sah Blas, produce some very valuable woods, amongst which may be enumerated fustic, cedar, ironwood, ebony, brazilletto, lancewood, spars, and a variety of hard woods, well adapted for the use of cabinetmakers, but hitherto very little known. The interior abounds in game of various descriptions, amongst which are the tapir, or mountain cow, the waree, peccary, gibeonite, Indian coney, antelope, armadillo, and others; also curassow.

guam, coquericot, partridge, and a great variety of other birds. Nor rivers or coast in the world can produce a greater variety of excellent fish, or finer turtle; and the quantity seems inexhaustible. Cocoa-nut trees are never cut down, nor destroyed by the Indians of San Blas; and are so abundant on all the kays, that the fruit is esteemed of little value, except on account of the oil, which the natives extract and use for dressing their hair, burning in lamps, and other purposes. Any quantity of these nuts, may be procured at a very trifling expense.

The inhabitants of this part of the coast, are careful to preserve the hawksbill turtle, as much as they possibly can. They never destroy its eggs, and have a singular, but cruel method, of taking the shell from its back, without killing the animal, as is done by the other tribes. They collect a quantity of dry grass, or leaves, with which they cover the creature's back, and then setting the stuff on fire, the heat causes the shell on the back to separate at the joints. A large knife is then insinuated horizontally, and the pieces are gradually lifted from the back, care being taken, not to injure the shell by two much heat, nor to force it off, till the heat has fully prepared it for separation.

The turtle is held down by an Indian during this cruel operation, and afterwards suffered to escape; but great numbers of them, reduced to this helpless state, fall a prey to the numerous sharks on the coast. There have been many instances, however, of turtle being afterwards caught, which had undergone the process, and the shell, subsequently formed, has, instead of thirteen pieces, the usual number, been in one piece only.

Traders, who are not judges of fustic, are often cheated, by having a kind of spurious, or bastard wood without dye, imposed upon them; and they themselves too often deteriorate the quality of the genuine wood, by immersing it, during their stay, in salt water, to increase its weight. These practices, together with the circumstance, that a great quantity of inferior wood is cut in low, swampy places, has depreciated the character of that which is collected here; but I am perfectly satisfied, that the fustic of the high land of the Isthmus, is as valuable as that of Cuba, Jamaica, or any other place whatsoever.

The natives are excellent hunters and strikers of fish. One of their methods of fishing is rather singular. The water on their coasts being very clear, they can easily see the fish basking, or swimming near the surface, or in the shallow places; and they kill considerable numbers, by following them in canoes, and shooting them with arrows. The women and children plant and cultivate Indian corn, cassava, plantain, and other provisions, the mens task being to cut down wood, prepare it for sale, or other purposes, and to clear ground for plantations. They are not so much addicted to spirituous liquors as some of the other Indians of the coast; and they use their own chicka, or liquor made from corn, cassava, and plantains, in preference to rum. They have in general but one wife, although there are some among them who, according to their inclination and ability to maintain them, have four or five. Their houses are constructed at a short distance from each other. Every wife has, in general, a separate house or hut and they live on friendly terms with their neigh

bours. The husband usually takes up his residence with the eldest, who considers it her duty to set the others a good example, and maintain a friendly communication in the family, by zealously directing their attention to his comfort and convenience. Sometimes although not often, they are all kept in one house, except during an advanced period of pregnancy, confinement, or suckling their children, at which season they invariably live by themselves. At the expected time, the woman, as is customary with most Indian tribes, retires to a hut built in the woods, at a distance from the rest of the family. There, she remains some time assisted by some aged female relation, who is closely secluded with her. The period of travail is short, compared to what is generally experienced in civilized life; and previous to returning to their usual intercourse with the family, a sort of public lustration of themselves and offspring takes place.

The persons of greatest consequence, next to the principal chiefs, are the Sookeah-men, who are both physicians and priests. These persons, are supposed to hold communication with an invisible agent, or great spirit, and to be empowered, through its means, to foretel events. They have acquired a knowledge of the medicinal virtues of some plants, and are thereby enabled to cure wounds, and also some of the disorders incident to the climate. They are, consequently, held in much esteem and veneration, by the more ignorant natives. Previous to being received as professed sookeahs, they are secluded, some times for months, in the woods, without, as is said, holding the least communication with any one; and here it is that

they are alleged to have intercourse with the spirit alluded to. They are deep, shrewd, and comparatively intelligent men, and, having once acquired an ascendancy at home, their fame soon extends to the neighbouring tribes.

I have often heard, and have no doubt whatever of the fact, that they have been known to dance, in a state of nudity, in the middle of a large fire, the flames having little or no effect on their body; and they generally do this until the fire is extinguished. The effects of the fire is resisted by some powerful antidote, extracted from vegetable substances, the preparation of which is only known to the superior sookeahs.

All their knowledge, however, has been insufficient to contend with the diseases introduced by Europeans, many of the natives having been carried off by the small-pox, measles, and other complaints for which they know no cure, and by which their numbers have been greatly reduced. On the first appearance of the measles or small-pox, which have proved as destructive to these poor Indians as the plague has been to the inhabitants of other quarters of the globe, they abandon their settlements, and fly to some of the numerous kays on the coast for the benefit of free air; on one of these the infected are carefully secluded, and shunned, until they are free from the disease;—death however generally puts an end to their sufferings.

The Mosquito-men have repeatedly attempted to acquire an ascendancy over the San Blas Indians, and much blood, in consequence, has been shed. The last expedition against the latter, took place about twenty years ago. It consisted of about

three hundred men, who were nearly all cut off in the different engagements that took place in the disadvantageous positions into which they were enticed. Very few of the assailants returned to their own country; and it is, therefore, not likely that any similar attempt will again be made from the Mosquito-shore.

How far it may be the policy of the new Governments of South America to endeavour to conciliate these and other free and independent tribes, remains to be seen; but, judging from some of the recent decrees of Colombia, it is much to be feared their value is not justly appreciated. By restrictions imposed on their trade, and otherwise, they may continue to regard the Colombians as no better than Spaniards; and if so, the consequences cannot but be injurious to both parties. Their country is naturally so strong, and the lagoons and harbours so very intricate, that contrabandists, privateers, or pirates,—if on friendly terms with the Indians—can always find shelter; and the trade to Carthagena, Porto Bello, &c. may, consequently, at any time meet with interruption and injury. This part of the Isthmus of Darien presents a fine field for the researches of the industrious and scientific traveller; and, no doubt, many very important discoveries, botanical, mineralogical, and otherwise, remain to be made by those who have inclination and ability to explore it.

To return to our commercial operations—Having left New Caledonia, we proceeded to Caret, where we disposed of the last of our goods, in barter for cocoa, with which we completed the cargo of the two Bongos, and came back in safety to the vessel, at Needle Kay. During our ab-

sence, the trader had maintained the most friendly correspondence with the natives, and had collected about one hundred tons of fustic, besides other more valuable produce, sufficient for a return cargo, with which we safely arrived in Jamaica, after an absence of about nine weeks.

In my subsequent voyages to this coast, I always found the Indians anxious and willing to promote the success of the vessels I commanded. In general, they became much attached to those who visit them repeatedly. Every succeeding voyage improves their friendship, and desire to encourage the commercial interests of their country, so far as their ignorance and inexperience will allow them to judge of it.

CHAPTER III.

VOYAGE TO CHIRIQUI LAGOON—PORTO BELLO — MOSQUITO SHORE — CHRICO MOLA — RESIDENCE THERE—SARSAPARILLA—EXCURSIONS IN THE INTERIOR—STORY, OF A GOLD SEEKER —HUNTING PARTY—VIEW OF THE ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC—VISIT FROM A SLOOP OF WAR —CHARACTER, AND CUSTOMS OF THE VALIENTES — SOUPA TREE — SERPENTS — BUCCANIERS — CHILIBEE, TIRIBEE, AND BLANCO INDIANS.

In the year 1817, my voyages to San Blas were interrupted by severe indisposition, which reduced me to a state of great debility. When convalescent, I accepted the offer of a friend, to accompany him on a general trading voyage to the Bight of Mandingo, and different parts of the Mosquito Shore. His object was to lodge supplies of goods, with his agents, at various trading depots; and to bring away from them, such quantities of fustic, tortoise-shell, sarsaparilla, cocoa, &c. as they had collected; afterwards, to sell the remainder of his dry goods, to the Spaniards at Coclec, Gold River,

Matina, and at the River San Juan de Nicaragua, for specie and gold dust. We accordingly proceeded to the coast of San Blas, and transacted business at New Caledonia, the River Mosquito, Sarsadee, and the Bight of Mandingo,—receiving considerable quantities of tortoise-shell, cocoa, and other valuable produce. Returning from the coast of San Blas, we passed Porto Bello, * and proceeded to Chiriqui Lagoon; which, although so far to the southward, is considered part of the Mosquito Shore, under the jurisdiction of the Mosquito King; who, notwithstanding that the Spaniards consider it a part of their province of Veragua, annually sends his admiral to collect tribute from the natives. Veragua joins Costa Rica a few miles to the westward of Boco del Toro, or the Bahia del Amirante. Costa Rica extends to Punta del Gordo, which is a short distance to the northward of the Rio de San Juan; and, may be considered, the boundary of the real, and nominal, Spanish possessions on that part of the coast.

At Point de Gordo, the Mosquito shore *proper* may be said to commence; and we here meet with the small independent tribe of Indians called the Ramás. From thence to Cape Gracias a Dios, where the Mosquito King principally resides, the coast lies nearly north and south, a distance of about two hundred and twenty miles. From Cape Gracias a Dios, the shore extends nearly north-west and by west, to the River Patook; and the distance is about one hundred miles. From thence to little Roman river, it stretches

* See Note II.

to the west, about ninety miles; forming a sea board or line of coast, of about four hundred and ten miles in extent, upon which the Spaniards have never been able to form any effective settlements.

On our arrival at Chiriqui Lagoon, I gladly assented to a proposal, made by my friend, to ascend the River Chrico Mola (or perhaps more properly Chrickam Aula), about twenty-five miles, to the principal settlement of the Valiente Indians; a station said to be exceedingly healthy—there to remain for the recovery of my health—become acquainted with the manners and customs of that tribe, and open a trade with the Indians in the interior of the country.

Having selected, and hired, three large canoes from those which were assembled round the vessel, we loaded them with goods to the value of about three hundred pounds: and, at noon, set off for the Valiente Settlement, where my friend had already formed a connexion with one of the native traders.

I found that the river has two mouths, formed by a small island at its entrance;—the one to the westward is broadest, having only about two feet water on the bar; the other, three feet.—After passing these entrances, it is of considerable depth up to the first rapid; a distance of about twelve miles.

At this rapid the land rises high on each side; and, up to the settlement, the river is so full of falls, rocks, and rapids, that it would be totally impossible for persons, unaccustomed to such places, to ascend even in the lightest canoes.—The In-

dians are obliged in the ascent, frequently to lay aside their paddles and use poles;—and at some places even to haul their canoes, over the rapids, by strength of arm,—which the force of the current renders no easy task;—the smooth rocks, and rounded stones, making it difficult to find a secure footing.—Between these rapids, however, there are many reaches, or smooth and deep parts of the river, some of them about a mile in length; and, the banks being covered by a variety of majestic trees and shrubs of the most lively colours, nothing of the kind which I have ever seen was more beautiful or picturesque.—After passing many falls and rapids, we came to the first Valiente Settlement.—The houses are situated at a small distance from the river; and are surrounded by large plantations of plantains, bananas, cassava, and cocoa.

Above the first settlement, the land continues gradually to extend; and, at the distance of about thirty miles, assumes a mountainous appearance. On the evening of the day following that on which we left the vessel, we arrived at the trader's house, situated on a moderately high bank close to the river. My new friend, Whykee Tarra, the trader alluded to, being informed of my intention to remain with his countrymen, received me very cordially, and made preparations for obeying the orders I had brought to him; viz. to proceed to the vessel with the goods he had collected; and to give his assistance in collecting tortoise-shell on the coast.

After having given me possession of his house, and desired his wife, who understood a little English, to pay every attention to my domestic com-

forts, and to assist me as an interpreter in my intercourse with the natives, he departed for the lagoon, taking with him a considerable stock of hogs, poultry, eggs, and plantains for the use of the crew.

Being thus installed in my new lodgings, and the chief man of the place being made acquainted with my intentions, a messenger was, by his advice, sent to give notice to the Indians residing in the interior, that an English trader had come to live among them. On his return, he informed me that in two or three days many of these Indians would visit me, bringing sarsaparilla, and such other articles as they had to offer for sale.

I accordingly soon received visits from several families, sometimes from ten to twenty in a group, each person bringing from fifty to eighty pounds weight of sarsaparilla, * in large bags made of silk grass, having a large band of the same material fastened across its mouth.—These bags, when filled, appeared like baskets, of which the band formed the handle; and they were suspended on the back of the Indian by this handle put across the forehead:—Women and children were loaded in a similar manner, in proportion to their strength.

Abundance of fowls, and some fine hogs were brought me, and also a great many extremely neat bags, or purses, of various sizes, made of silk grass, and dyed of various bright colours,—some of the threads nearly as fine as lace.

Scarlet, blue, yellow, and purple, were the most predominant colours; and, when newly dyed, they appeared very fresh and bright, but did not stand

* Smilax Sarsaparilla of Linn.

the rain or weather, which shows, that although the Indians possess some very valuable dyes, they have not the secret of rendering them durable. They also brought me a number of small lines, from twenty to thirty fathoms in length, made of the interwoven fibres of cotton and silk grass. These they are in the habit of bartering with the fishing Indians of the coast, who use them as striking lines for securing turtle, &c. I gave in barter for these articles, fish hooks, glass beads, small Dutch looking-glasses, seamens' knives, and other articles of little value.

The Indians on the coast think themselves entitled to assume a superiority over these "Montanios" in consequence of the connexion of the former with the traders. So far as regarded myself, I found these natives of the interior, harmless, inoffensive, honest in their dealings, and satisfied with whatever was given to them in exchange for the commodities they brought. It is true, that many of these commodities were perfectly useless to me, but I made it a rule never to refuse any thing offered, or to send the persons home entirely disappointed in their expectations. On such an occasion a few beads, a small looking-glass, a bit of tobacco, and a few pipes, or some other trifle, satisfied and pleased them.

Many of the people, who then and subsequently visited me, came, as I was told, and had every reason to believe, from the low country, bordering on the Pacific Ocean; having crossed the mountains about thirty miles above this settlement. These mountains are of considerable elevation, covered with wood to the summits, and form the natural boundary between the Valientes, and

those Indians who occasionally trade with the Spaniards.

Sarsaparilla being one of the principal articles of trade with these people, and its virtues, as a medicine, becoming every day more popular in Europe, I may here remark, that the kind which is collected in the Savannahs is more esteemed than that which is brought from the mountains; being much thicker, and containing a greater quantity of medicinal substance. The latter sort is so fibrous, that it is rare to see a stalk the thickness of the stem of an ordinary tobacco-pipe, and much of it is spoiled, by being dried in an artificial, careless, and hasty manner, instead of by a regular and gradual exposure to the sun:—by the former method it is frequently scorched, or becomes so black and discoloured, as to be nearly useless;—on the accession of the least damp, it is apt to become mouldy, its essential qualities spoil, and it is then totally unfit for use.

After I had resided some time at Chrico Mola, the Indians from the south side of the mountains frequently brought me Spanish money and pieces of silver, for the purchase of iron pots, cutlass blades, earthen ware, and dry goods. Many of these Indians have incurred the jealousy of the Valientes, who dislike their familiar intercourse with the Spaniards. Their quarrels on this subject often end in bloodshed, and the Valientes seldom approach, or trust themselves within reach of the Spanish territory. *

From my first arrival at Chrico Mola, I gradually acquired bodily strength,—and I followed the example of the inhabitants, old and young, by daily bathing in the river, which is here as clear

* See Note III.

as crystal, and pleasantly cool. Alligators do not ascend higher than the first fall, so that there is no danger of annoyance from them, and to these frequent ablutions I attributed, in a great measure, my rapid recovery to perfect health.

In less than six weeks after my arrival I had procured upwards of five thousand pounds weight of sarsaparilla; and conceiving that a regular supply of this valuable article might be obtained here for supplying the Jamaica market, provided the Indians were properly encouraged to collect it, I came to the determination of remaining at Chrico Mola, until next season at least. On the return of the vessel which had left me here, I went down to the Lagoon and communicated my ideas on the subject to he rowner, who, forseeing the advantages likely to be derived from the residence of a European among the Valientes, immediately assented to my proposal. Having delivered over to him the produce that I had collected, I received a farther supply of the goods which I considered necessary, for the consumption of the natives, until he should return. It was not without some doubt of my own prudence that I found myself and property, entirely at the mercy of my new friends:—I had however acquired considerable confidence with the headmen, who, in one of their Talks, or Councils, came to a resolution to give me every protection, and all the facilities in their power, for trading; and, as a farther proof of their good will, the principal headman offered me an Indian wife, and every other accommodation.

As I recovered strength, having much leisure time on my hands, and having always been fond of hunting and fishing, I gradually extended my ram-

bles into the interior. With the assistance of a small pocket compass, I had little fear of losing myself; and, becoming acquainted with the Indian tracks, I often penetrated many miles into the woods, reaching solitudes where, apparently, no human being had ever preceded me. I had often heard that gold might be found in abundance, in the country about Chrico Mola, and that the old Indians, were well acquainted with the places, where it has been discovered. Their jealousy of strangers, and their dread of exciting the cupidity of the Spaniards, induces them, however, carefully to conceal this knowledge, and the following occurence which took place a few years ago, is illustrative of this feeling on their part. A Mulatto, from Jamaica, of the name of Wedderburn, who had been some time resident at Chrico Mola was in the habit of trading at places where he occasionally met with Spaniards. He became acquainted, in one of his excursions, with a Spanish Creole, who, having become disgusted with his employers, proprietors of a gold mine about twenty miles up Gold River, and about thirty from Valiente Point, agreed to accompany the trader, and take up his residence at Chrico Mola. Shortly after his arrival he discovered indications of gold in the vicinity of the river, and, by absenting himself for several hours every day, attracted the notice of the trader, to whom he confessed that he had discovered gold; and, with the help of an old crow-bar, had already dug up and collected several ounces. He was either not aware of the jealousy of the natives, or had not used the precaution necessary to elude their observation. One of them called a Council of the

headmen, who next day sent for the trader, and demanded that the Spaniard should be given up to them, to be sent out of the country. He was assured that no harm should happen, and that a canoe and every thing requisite to enable his friend to reach Portobello, or some other place of safety, should be granted to him. Accordingly he departed, accompanied by some of the natives, who were to see him safely out of the river. They returned in two days, but the Spaniard was never again heard of by any of the traders; and, I have no doubt, they put him to death, to avoid the risk of any annoyance from Europeans on account of the gold mines in their country. Notwithstanding this example, I often, in my hunting rambles, stopped to look for gold, particularly when my path has been obstructed by deep ravines and old dried up water-courses from the mountains; but I was then unacquainted with the indications of this precious metal; and I never considered it safe, or prudent, to remain stationary for any length of time, in these solitary places, so remote from the habitations of men.

On my return from one of these excursions the chief man, of the settlement, named by the traders Jasper Hall, told me, that some of the women had discovered the track of an extraordinary animal, which had filled them with much apprehension; and that none of the hunters could make out, from their description, what it was; the women insisting that it could only be "Devils track." The story excited my curiosity; and not doubting but that it might prove to be that of some large animal, probably unknown in Europe, I persuaded

him to make up a hunting party and go in search of it. Jasper, myself, and other three men, provided with provisions and other materials to enable us to remain a night or two in the woods if necessary, set out at day-break—well armed—and having three of the women with us to serve as guides. After proceeding more than four hours by an unusual route, we came to a deep ravine, which we ascended nearly a mile to a place where the tract had become visible. Here old Jasper burst into a loud laugh, calling out, "Hai Robert! him devil tract found"—and on investigation it proved to be the marks of a pair of coarse hobb-nailed shoes, which I had worn on one of my long excursions. We had approached the ravine by a different path than that by which I had penetrated, and I was amused to find that I had come so far in search of my own footsteps.

I would not dwell upon this trifling occurrence, were it not that besides being descriptive of Indian life, it led to an excursion which I had often wished to accomplish. We had seen several kinds of game during our progress, but had not fired one shot, for fear of alarming the strange animal we sought. The women had brought plantains and cassava, and we now proposed to stay a day or two in the woods, and endeavour to procure some game to carry home with us. The Indians soon erected some rude huts on the spot, and the women were left to cover the roofs with leaves of the wild plantain. We proceeded a considerable way up the ravine, and at last heard the noise of the peccary or wild hog, and shortly discovered a drove of nearly a hundred of them. We killed about twenty; and the noise of our firearms having

brought the women to our assistance, all hands were soon busily employed in cutting out the gland on the back of the animal, and dividing the carcass, into quarters, for the purpose of being *barbacued*. This operation is performed by erecting a low frame, or grating of wood, upon which the meat is laid, and covered with leaves; a fire is lighted underneath, and the flesh is in this manner not only smoked, but sometimes half roasted, before it is considered sufficiently cured. It will keep good during several weeks.

The ears of the peccary are short, pointed, and erect; the eyes are sunk deep in the head, the neck is short and thick, the bristles are nearly as large as those of the hedgehog,—longest on the neck and back; it is of a hoary black colour, annulate with white, having a collar, from the shoulders to the breast, of dusky white;—in size, and colour, it something resembles the hog of China; it has no tail,—on the back there is a glandulous opening, from which constantly distils a thin fetid liquor. If the animal is killed in the evening, this part carefully cut out, and the liquor instantly washed away, the flesh is agreeable food. They grunt with a strong harsh sound; and, when vexed, make a most disagreeable noise with their tusks, which are scarcely conspicuous when their mouth is shut. They will sometimes turn, with fury, on their assailant, whose best refuge, in that case, is to climb upon a tree, and then, if he has good dogs, to keep them in play—he may kill them at pleasure so long as his ammunition lasts. They principally feed on fruits seeds and roots; and sometimes do much mischief in the plantain and cassava walks.

We remained at the huts all night, and, next morning, leaving the women to complete the operation of curing the produce of our labour, we renewed our expedition.

Having often heard that the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans could be seen at the same time from the summit of a mountain about thirty miles from Chrico Mola, or twenty from the spot where we now were, I was exceedingly desirous of ascertaining the fact, and I persuaded Jasper to take that direction. Our way, in pursuing our route towards that point, was nearly free from underwood or any material impediment, unless when we met with ravines, which are, in some places, wide, and the bottom and sides partly composed of large masses of rock. There were some deep pools of clear water in these hollows, in which I could perceive a number of small fish. In the rainy season when these ravines must by every appearance contain an immense body of water, to cross them will be impossible.

In the afternoon we succeeded in gaining the summit of the mountain, where I was well repaid for the great fatigue and trouble of ascending. It did not terminate in any peak or cone, nor had it the particular appearance of volcanic origin, but was rather the continuation of a chain, or ridge of mountains, which rose higher than any of those in the immediate neighbourhood.

About five hundred yards across its summit, the descent, towards the Pacific, commences rather abruptly; and, is more precipitous than on the side by which we ascended. Mountains still higher appeared to the eastward in the direction of Pana-

ma and Chagre. To the north-west, an immense and continued unbroken chain of mountains presented themselves as far as the eye could reach; and, here and there, various high, isolated, peaks, having the appearance of volcanoes, sprung up from the chain. *I had a clear and distinct view of both seas;* many of the islands in the Boco del Toro and Chiriqui Lagoons on the Atlantic side, were distinctly seen, but I could not perceive Quibo, nor any of the islands on the Pacific, which I thought would, if correctly laid down in the charts, have been visible. The immense forests of stately trees which vegetate on the sides of all rivers in this country, and clothe most of the mountains to their very summits, effectually prevented our tracing the course of these rivers; nevertheless, the country, from the spot on which we obtained this delightful view, presented the map of an immense mountain forest, drawn on Nature's grandest scale.

As night was fast approaching, and there is little twilight in this climate, the Indians became impatient to descend; and with regret, I left the ridge on which I had experienced such perfect enjoyment. We got down to a ravine, and having procured a quantity of wild plantain leaves, we ascended one of its sides, and, gathering wood, made a large fire, by the side of which we made our supper of the peccary meat, brought with us.

I stretched myself upon my bed of leaves, and, having commended myself to Him whose mighty works I had been admiring, and who, by his Providence, equally guides the Indian and European, I sunk into profound repose, with as complete a feeling of security, as if I had been in the midst of

civilisation, and surrounded by numerous friends and relations.

On the first appearance of daylight, we put our guns in order, and descended the mountain at a quick pace. We shot several guams and curassows on our way down; by mid-day came to the huts, and found the women in safety. Having rested and refreshed ourselves, we prepared for our journey homewards, each carrying a proportion of the provisions and game, the produce of our hunt. We reached the settlement after sunset, much fatigued, but highly pleased with the result of the expedition.

Immediately on our return, I had a good opportunity of ascertaining how far the Valientes could be depended upon to repel any attempt of invasion from their enemies. I found the settlement in considerable alarm, and the whole population on the alert. A strange ship of war had arrived in the lagoon, and come to an anchor off the mouth of Chrico Mola river, after having fired at two Valiente fishing-canoes, as a signal, no doubt, to bring them to the ship; but the Indians, mistaking this for an indication of hostility, jumped overboard, swam ashore, and gave an alarm that the Spaniards were coming. A red flag had been hoisted, on a small island off the mouth of the river, probably as a signal to the natives to come to that place; but when these people heard the drums beat, and the evening gun fired, they concluded that they were to be attacked, especially when a canoe returned with intelligence that they had seen a large boat, with armed Europeans, on its way *down* the river, a little beneath the first fall. I found the Indians removing their wo-

men, children, and valuables, across the river, to the woods for safety; and, as I had at this time a very considerable quantity of tortoise-shell, sarsaparilla, and other produce under my charge, I stated my opinion, that if they were Spaniards, or others coming with hostile intentions, it was probable, that, having reconnoitred, they would attempt to force their way up, during the night, or early in the morning; and, that if they were allowed to pass the falls, the destruction of the settlement was inevitable; but that by fighting at each fall successively, we might easily defend ourselves not only against this ship, but any greater force likely to be sent against us. The Valientes seconded me with alacrity. I distributed among them all the fowling-pieces that I had for sale. Moreover, we mustered forty-three muskets and fowling-pieces, besides spears, bows and arrows, in the different houses along the river. I served out some kegs of gunpowder, and all the bullets, and Bristol blue shot, that I had in the store. The men were posted at the different falls, and if we had been attacked, all felt confident of the result. In the morning a large armed canoe was sent down the river for intelligence, and met Captain Cox with some of the officers of his Majesty's brig Sheerwater, coming up the river in a large boat, conducted by three of the Valientes. Captain Cox informed me, that on his way down the coast to San Juan, he had, owing to calms and a strong west current, been carried to leeward of Boco del Toro; and, hearing there was an English settlement at Chrico Mola, curiosity and a desire to be useful to his countrymen had induced him to endeavour to find them out. These officers remained with me

until next day; curiosity had attracted a number of the Valientes, who assembled about my house, to see the strangers; their deportment was orderly; the Valiente girls were much admired, and my countrymen were pleased to admit, that, altogether, the people were much superior to any tribe they had seen on the coast. When the captain and his officers left me they expressed themselves much pleased with the visit. I furnished them with such fresh provisions as I could collect upon so short a notice, giving them all the native curiosities I had collected, as well as those I could procure among my friends. The Indians, who accompanied them back to the vessel, brought me a present of tea, coffee, sugar, and wine;—and, in return, I induced my friends to follow Captain Cox through the channel of the Split Hills, in the Boco del Toro Lagoon, with a few more dozens of fowls, plantains, &c.

This visit created considerable speculation among the Indians, whom I laboured hard to convince, that it was their interest to court a friendly communication with the British;—that their country contained many articles, very valuable in British commerce; and, that they only required to be known, to be visited by large trading vessels direct from England. Upon the whole, this visit, and these representations, made a considerable impression on the minds of the natives; and, subsequently, in consequence of it, I stood much higher in their estimation.

Several customs of the Valientes, seem peculiar to that race only. When one of them dies, the body is always buried in the floor of the house occupied by the family; the only exceptions to this

rule, are when an Indian has been stung to death by a serpent, or slain in a quarrel with one of his own tribe :—in either of these cases, they are interred under a house, in their own provision-ground, and their implements of war, and other moveables, are buried with them ; their canoe is also generally split in two, and laid on the grave. Moreover, even the plantain-walks and provisions on the grounds immediately belonging to such persons, are destroyed. At the death of a relation, they manifest extraordinary grief, the women especially—who beat their bosoms, tear their hair, cut their flesh, and use other demonstrations of the most extravagant sorrow. The son, if there is one, succeeds to his father's house and women. The moveables, such as canoes, hunting and fishing implements, arms, trinkets, &c., are divided amongst his children. If there be no children, the eldest brother succeeds to every thing. The women have little choice in the disposal of their persons in marriage: that affair being always arranged by their father, or nearest male relations.

The children, of both sexes, are early taught to swim ; one of their principal pastimes is sporting in the water, to which they resort almost as soon as they can walk. As they increase in years, they are instructed to use the bow and arrow and the spear ; and they acquire dexterity by practising with blunted instruments upon the fowls, dogs, or other domestic animals or birds, reared about the house. As they acquire strength, the boys, have other duties to perform ; they are taken to fish and spear turtle : on these expeditions they are sometimes absent, with the men, three weeks or a month ; and, on returning, they always divide

part of the spoil among their neighbours and friends. The girls are early taught to accompany their mothers to the provision grounds;—to carry light burdens of wood, plantains, cassava and other articles;—to grind corn, wash and prepare cotton and silk grass, and attend to other domestic offices. They, equally with the boys, bathe frequently in course of the day; but, from the age of six years, at which time they are generally betrothed, these ablutions are performed at a distance, under the protection of their mothers, who after that period, seldom allow their daughters to be out of their sight, until marriage, which generally takes place at the early age of ten or twelve years.

When a Valiente Indian considers himself affronted, or injured, by one of his own tribe, he deliberately sharpens his moscheat or cutlass; and, taking a friend with him, goes to the house of his adversary, whom he challenges to fair combat. The challenge is frequently accepted on the spot; fair play is allowed, and the duel never ends until one, or sometimes both, are killed or disabled.

They display considerable dexterity in the use of the cutlass, both in attack and defence; and it is rare to find a Valiente without the mark of deep cuts on his body, and particularly about the head. If the challenged party puts off the decision of the quarrel to a future day, it is generally made up, by the intervention of friends. Being "called out" by one of these slashing gentlemen, I insisted upon substituting rifle guns, a proposal which he declared "English fashion, no good!" and, by the interference of friends, we settled our dispute without bloodshed. Few of them can use firearms with effect, but they are very expert with

the bow and arrow, and are good and dexterous spearmen.

They are in general courageous, possess much sense of honour, and continue to merit the appellation given to them by their first discoverers, of "Indios Bravos" or "Valientes." They are a much taller race of people than those of San Blas, and may, from their intercourse with European and other traders, be considered more civilized than most of the other tribes, inhabiting this part of *Terra Firma*. Their avowed hatred to the Spaniards, and partiality to the English, as may be seen from what has already been stated on that subject, renders a temporary or perhaps permanent trading settlement amongst them perfectly secure; and, in point of honesty, they are far superior to their neighbours the Mosquito men, to whose king they, however, pay a sort of tribute, or acknowledgment, annually, which they consider in the light of a gratuitous present according to ancient custom, rather than a mark of subjugation. On more than one occasion they have refused to pay this tribute, and about fifty years ago, when a dispute took place on the subject, the Mosquito king's uncle, with the whole of the chiefs, and people, who then accompanied him to the number of about fifty men, fell a sacrifice to their resentment.

No Sookeah man, or priest of any kind, resided amongst them during the years I visited, or resided in, their country. Marriage, baptism, and other ceremonies, commonly considered religious, were performed by the elders of the settlement. They are not, however, without ideas of a future state, and an overruling Providence; and, to any wonder-

ful, or providential, escape from danger; or, unaccountable preservation, they sometimes give the name of "God business." For instance, in one of my excursions above the great falls, the Indians inadvertently allowed the canoe to drift so near to a tremendous precipice, that they had no chance of paddling her out of danger. They instantly leapt overboard and swam ashore. Being so completely taken by surprise, I saw no chance of safety but by keeping in the canoe, which went over the fall and was dashed in pieces. When I recovered my recollection, I found myself in the water, by the side of a small island, a little distance beneath the fall, grasping firmly some bushes that overhung the river. Some Indians on the other side of the river, who had not seen the accident, conveyed me down to my own house. Feeling sick from the shock I had received, I lay down to recover myself. In the meantime my companions in the canoe had gone home and reported my death, in confirmation of which they pointed out the splinters of the canoe floating past the settlement. I had scarcely been an hour in my hammock when old Jasper, and other headmen, came to my house, lamenting my death, and proposing to take an account of my effects, that they might be taken care of for my relations, or creditors. Nothing could equal their astonishment when I sat up and asked them what they were about to do? "By Robert!" a favourite exclamation of the old chief, "you no drown!" then he added with a certain degree of reverential awe, "this is God business, Robert! only God business!!"

They have also some faint ideas of disembodi-

ed spirits, and of another world, where they expect to find good hunting ground, with plenty of game and provisions. I firmly believe that were a steady sensible missionary, of liberal principles, capable of making them a little acquainted with the arts of Europe, to accompany any trader going to reside among them, by gradually overcoming their prejudices, and pointing out the advantages of civilization, religious observances, and certain fixed laws, he might acquire influence, and do much good.

Their houses are generally built near the banks of a river, and are constructed as follows:—three or sometimes four hardwood posts are driven into the ground, at equal distances, the intended length of the house, to these is secured the main beam or roof-tree. Small posts are also driven, in like manner, at each side, at intervals of ten or twelve feet; long poles or rafters are then laid upon these from the roof-tree and along the sides; the roof, thus formed, is covered with a particular species of palm, extremely durable, and the sides are finished in a similar manner. Sometimes the roof is brought down, at the sides of the house, to within five feet of the ground, and the sides left entirely open, without any wall to shelter the inmates from the weather; in this case they sleep on what they call crickeries, a kind of elevated platform, constructed by four posts being driven into the ground at equal distances, so as to form a square frame; a plank of cedar wood is then cut into proper lengths, to form the bottom. This sleeping place is generally large enough to contain the husband and two or three wives; and, when the family is numerous, several

of these bed-places are erected round the inside of the house—on a level with the eaves, or lower side of the roof. A notched log of wood, serves for a ladder to mount to this couch,—as, without any other instrument than the axe, only one board can be cut out of a cedar tree; to form one of those sleeping places is a work of great labour.

Their plantain walks are very extensive; and, at Chrico Mola, extend several miles along the banks of the river. These walks are never exhausted, as on some parts of the Mosquito Shore, where the soil is poor; on the contrary, a continual succession of suckers, or young plants, are always found springing round the foot of the original plant; and, such is the luxuriance of their growth, that they are frequently thinned, transplanted, or destroyed. Large quantities of cassava and Indian corn are cultivated farther back; but, for subsistence, they principally depend upon the plantain, banana, and cassava. Their method of preparing ground for a maize crop, is very simple; the person invites his neighbours to a chichee drink, states his wish to clear a certain piece of land, and requests their assistance. On the day appointed every man comes with his axe or moscheat, the trees and bushes are soon levelled, and the grain is loosely scattered on the ground amongst the fallen trees. This generally takes place a few days before the commencement of the rainy season. The fallen branches screen the young shoots from the heat of the sun, and in about five months the grain, having overtopped this covering, is ready for gathering; rather a troublesome business, the grain being only reached by climbing over the trunks, branches, and remains of the fallen trees.

When the grain has been collected, the wood, which is by this time well dried, is set on fire; and, assisted by the dry stalks of the maize, burns so fiercely as to leave merely ashes, and the stumps of the trees on the surface. By this simple plan, the ground is considered sufficiently clear for every agricultural purpose. The cocoa tree grows in every banana or plantain walk; the soil on the borders of the Chrico Mola, and other rivers emptying themselves into Chiriqui Lagoon, being particularly adapted to its growth; it comes to perfection in not more than four or five years, with very little trouble to the cultivators, who raise it merely for their own consumption; although, were they encouraged to raise it as an article of commerce, an immense quantity, of excellent quality, might be produced on the banks of all these rivers.

The soil about Chrico Mola, as has, in effect, been stated, is exceedingly rich; it produces in the greatest perfection almost all the fruits incident to South America; such as the mammee, sapodilla, cocoa-nut, orange grape tree, locust, soupa (which in season is preferred to the plantain, banana, and cassava); and a variety of other fruits of the most delicious and valuable description.

The soupa merits particular attention. It is a species of palm; the trunk completely armed with prickles or thorns, is from fifty to sixty feet high: on the top, the leaves branch out similar to those of the cocoa tree—they are pinnated—very thin—undulated—and frizzled toward the points. It bears several clusters of fruit, each cluster containing from eighty to a hundred. They are first

green, then yellow like an apple, and grow red as they ripen. They are the size of a hen's egg, and sometimes without any kernel; the fruit is farinacious, and an excellent substitute for bread or vegetables. The wood of the tree is extremely hard, heavy, and close-grained; it is used for bows, staves for striking turtle, and for spear shafts. The stem is so prickly that the fruit can only be gathered by means of long bamboos, or when it becomes so ripe as to fall from the tree.

The mode of living, of the Valientes, is upon the whole comfortable: Nature has supplied them abundantly with the necessaries of life: their plantations are managed with very little labour, and their woods contain abundance of game: their rivers abound in the finest fish, and their Lagoons are plentifully furnished with the richest turtle, and other food for their support. Anciently the common covering of these Indians was made of a sort of tree bark, prepared by being some time soaked in running water, and afterwards beaten with a smooth heavy club into a consistence resembling shamoy leather. This was formed into a square piece, six or seven feet long, and about five feet wide, with a hole cut in the centre to admit the head. Now, however, they are dressed with greater decency, many of them put on even a complete European suit; and I have seen their traders, and head men, even well dressed, or, in their own words, "true English gentleman fashion," and followed by numbers of their less fortunate countrymen, who had some favour to ask, or were desirous of paying their court to the great man, who, in the mean time was, perhaps, strut-

ting about with a silk umbrella over his head, to protect him from the sun.

The wet season is not, with them, considered an unhealthy period; on the contrary, it is one of rest and enjoyment, during which, they form parties for drinking weak preparations of cocoa, of which they take immense quantities. Their method of preparing it is extremely simple, it being merely bruized, or crushed, between two stones, and ground to a consistence of paste, diluted with warm water; and, in this state, passed round to the company in calabashes containing each about a quart: Some Indians drink eight or ten quarts at a sitting, which induces a state of sleepy insensibility. At these meetings, it is a favourite amusement to tell long stories, or make harangues, in a singing monotonous tone of voice, to which all listen without interrupting the speaker, however improbable the story may be. I have frequently, in my turn, endeavoured to give them an account of some remarkable occurrence of my life, or some idea of European power and attainments:—however incomprehensible and impossible some of these things must have appeared to ignorant Indians, they never offered the least interruption. When a story was ended, some of the elders would perhaps consider a few minutes, and, after looking round to collect, as it were, the opinions of the company, would gravely say "lie Robert, lie,"—to which I would answer, "no lie, all true, English fashion," "but *now*," I would add, "I am going to tell you a lie story"—when they would with the greatest good nature gather round, to hear "Robert tell story."

Their chichee drinks are of a different description; and, in some cases, that liquor, as well as a sort of wine, made from the fruit of a species of the palm tree, renders them outrageously intoxicated. Such occurrences are, however, much more rare amongst the Valientes and San Blas men, than any other tribe of Indians with whom I am acquainted; and these drinking matches are only given on some particular occasions, such as previous to setting off for the turtle fishing, gathering a harvest of maize, at a wedding, or the birth of a child.

There may be many places, on the coast, better situated for trade; but, for a healthy residence, or permanent settlement of Europeans, I would prefer Chrico Mola River to any other I have seen. Domestic animals increase very fast when the least care is taken of them; a few hogs, which I procured for breeding, as also a quantity of tame fowls, increased so rapidly, that in the end I was at a loss what to do with them until the month of May, when the traders should arrive to take them, and some cows and calves off my hands.

Mosquitoes, sand flies, and other insects, which on the coast are so very troublesome and tormenting, are here scarcely known; and, during the whole time of my residence, I slept without being under the necessity of using mosquito curtains. Serpents or other poisonous reptiles are equally rare, and it is still rarer that any injury is sustained from them. On one occasion, however, I had a narrow escape from one of these creatures. I had as usual been bathing one morning, and was turning, to go up the bank, to my house, when one of the Indians, coming down the river in a canoe, pointed to some large, round, dark-colour-

ed stones, close to those on which my shirt and trowsers had been laid a few minutes before, and called "Hai Robert, you see him, great serpent." I, however, could perceive nothing of the kind: The Indian begged me to keep back from the place, go for my fowling-piece, and come into the canoe. Paddling opposite to the place he pointed out, I at last saw, coiled up among the stones, a large dark-coloured serpent, with his head resting in the centre of the circle, a little elevated, seemingly asleep. Taking a proper distance, I shattered his head to pieces with the contents of both barrels. He was said to be of a species whose bite is mortal, but I rather think he was of the dark-coloured boa kind: he was above twelve feet long, and the Indians affirmed that he must have crossed the river from the opposite forest, as it is very rare that they venture into the plantations.

As I frequently made excursions to Chiriqui Lagoon, I can with certainty assure any navigator who may visit it, that he will find it a safe and noble harbour. It has three entrances, one from the eastward round Valiente or Valencia Point; the other, from the north-west, by the Sapadilla kays; and a third by the Boco del Toro Lagoon. The first and second entrances command a sufficient draught of water for ships of the largest class; and the Lagoon is capable of containing the whole British Navy secure from all winds. There are several banks of soft white coral in the Lagoon, but all distinctly visible when the sun shines; and the water being, in general, perfectly smooth, a vigilant look out is all the pilotage requisite. At the eastern entrance is a small kay, * opposite to

* Paterson's Kay.

which, at the northern end of a sandy beach, and not far from the entrance of the harbour, is a cascade, falling from a rock of the height of about five feet from the ground,—forming one of the most convenient watering places, as a seventy-four gun ship may lay close to it. It is superior to water kay, which, together with Tigers' Island, Provision Island, and many other places on this coast, received its name from the old Buccaneers. The entrance to the Boco del Toro Lagoon, or Bahia del Amirante, from the north-west, is narrow, yet sufficient for a smart vessel to work in or out; and, it has about three fathoms water in the channel; the other entrance, from Provision Island, is also a good channel, of considerable depth; but the best entrances into Chiriqui Lagoon, are those from the eastward.

Provision Island has for several years been occupied by fishermen, from San Andres, and the Corn Islands, who barter their tortoise-shell, and other produce, with the annual traders.

I made many excursions to the various islands and kays in these lagoons, and found plenty of quams, curassowos, pigeons, monkeys, deer, and a variety of other game on all of them. They also produce vanilla, a valuable plant, to be hereafter noticed. On some of these islands there is a small species of tiger, but they are not at all dangerous; the climate is considered healthy, the lagoons, notwithstanding the very heavy rains during the season, being at all times open to the sea breeze. Between Provision Island and a small island opposite to it, their is a deep height, called Nancy's Cove; completely sheltered from all winds, and in which the water is always as smooth as in

a millpond. From this place to the north-west entrance of the port of Boco del Toro, is about sixteen miles; and the whole length of both lagoons cannot be less than ninety to a hundred miles.

The Buccaneers and free traders, used, occasionally, when afraid of an enemy, to conceal their vessels, in these lagoons, by hauling them into creeks, or intricate passages, under the overhanging branches of the trees; and, then, by lowering the topmasts, and fixing green boughs to the yards and masts, so disguised their appearance, that it was almost impossible even for the practised eye of an Indian to discover the smallest indication of a vessel.

Even when a discovery was made, no moderate force dared venture to attack an enemy, who, under cover of the bushes, and assisted by their Indian allies, could beat off their assailants without exposing themselves to a single well aimed shot.

The banks of many of the rivers falling into these lagoons, are now totally destitute of inhabitants; although, at one period, the country contained a numerous population consisting of various tribes, some of them, from the apparent remains of their ancient settlements, of considerable antiquity. The Chilibees, the Tirribees, and Blancos, were once numerous; but in consequence of their wars, and the introduction of European diseases, they are now almost extinct. Of the once numerous tribe of Chilibees, who possessed the borders of Boco del Toro Lagoon, not more than three families are left at that place; and the Tirribees, and Blancos, are falling off in like manner, their country being now very thinly inhabited.

The Valientes however seem to hold their ground and have concentrated themselves principally about Chrico Mola, the rivers Coco, Beling—(or Bethelem of the Spaniards)—and some other streams, the sources of which are very little known.

By the time the traders returned the season after I settled at Chrico Mola, the produce of my exertions was upwards of nine thousand pounds weight of good sarsaparilla, besides cocoa, and a considerable quantity of tortoise shell, and other valuable produce. My reasons for finally leaving that station will be hereafter explained; and should any new trader shortly visit that part of the world, I can recommend my friend, the native trader, Whykee Tarra, to him, as a faithful and honest assistant.

CHAPTER IV.

RIO DEL ORO—GOLD MINE—RIVER BELEM—LEAVE CHIRIQUI AND BOCO DEL TORO—TIRIBEE INDIANS—BLANCOS—TRADE AT SALT CREEK—MATINA—CARTAGO—DREADFUL EARTHQUAKE—TURTLE BIGHT—NATURAL HISTORY—RIO COLORADO—RIVER AND HARBOUR OF SAN JUAN—INDIAN RIVER—VANILLA PLANT—RAMA INDIANS AND RIVER—BLUEFIELDS LAGOON—FORMER ENGLISH SETTLEMENTS—BLUEFIELDS RIVER—COOKRA AND WOOLWA INDIANS.

DURING one of the turtle fishing seasons, I fitted out a large canoe; loaded her with goods to the value of about three hundred pounds, and, taking two stout lads to assist me, I visited several places on the coast of the Province of Veragua; calling at Cocoa Plum Point, and the small island Escuda Veragua off the river of that name,—both places much frequented for turtle. From thence I went over to the entrance of the Rio del Oro, the last Spanish settlement on the coast in the above named province, where I found a party of four people stationed for the purpose of apprising the Spanish

merchants at La Concepcion, a town in the interior, of the arrival of any trading vessel on the coast. Here, also, I met with two Spanish creoles, from whom I procured, in payment of goods, several ounces of gold dust. These people rather hurriedly left me, under pretence of going up the river to a gold mine, for the purpose of bringing down more dust, with some of their companions, who, as they said, wrought at the mine four days in the week, for their employer, and the remaining two days for their own benefit;—but, being too weak to protect myself, against any body of men, however small, and suspecting treachery, I considered it imprudent to wait their return.

The information I then and subsequently, obtained, was, that this valuable mine had, some time ago, been discovered, about thirty miles up the river; and that the patriot commanders at Old Providence, hearing that its proprietor, Don Juan Lopez, occasionally sold gold to the Jamaica and other traders, to the amount of three or four thousand dollars at one time, determined upon plundering him, and sent a vessel for the purpose, from that island.

Lopez got notice of their approach in time to escape, with his people and treasure, into the woods. These patriots, or pirates, abandoned the place after murdering, in cold blood, a faithful old negro who had given the alarm, and this attempt so frightened the Spaniards, that the workmen deserted, and the mine was some time abandoned. Lopez had since procured fresh workmen from Panama; and at the time of my visit to the coast, the mine was again wrought, although in a very bungling manner. The fellows from whom I pro-

cured the gold dust were without shirts or breeches; their only clothing was a piece of blue cotton cloth, in which the gold was concealed, round their loins.

It is doubtful whether the former Spanish authorities knew any thing of the situation of this mine; which, in its present unprotected state can, at any time, be plundered by the Valiente Indians, or even by the crew of any common piratical vessel.

At the river Belen, or Belem, where, in the year fifteen hundred and two, Columbus was prevented, by the outrageous opposition of the natives and the turbulent disposition of his followers, from fixing a colony,—I procured tortoise-shell from two Spaniards, who with their wives and families were residing there.

The river is large, and wide at its entrance; but being open to the north-west, it is barred up with more than four feet water at its mouth. The country, on each side of the river, appeared to be very fertile, and abounding in provisions, and other natural products of the soil. From thence I proceeded to Coclee, a river of a similar description, where I found a guard of Spaniards, who, after having bartered the tortoise-shell which they had collected, paid for the remainder of my goods in cash. These people always appeared glad to see me, and pressed me to renew my visits, and continue to trade with them.

The whole of the coast, from Chiriqui to Chagre, is destitute of harbours for large vessels, the mouths of the rivers being completely exposed to the heavy seas which roll in from the north, north-

west, and north-east, are completely barred up; and, having only a very few feet water at their entrances, they are totally unfit for navigation.

This short trip was a very profitable one, and only occupied three or four days. As I could have disposed of double the quantity of goods, I was encouraged to undertake similar voyages, in larger canoes, and on a regular plan, along the whole coast of the Mosquito Shore; and, for the purpose of procuring such canoes, I embraced the opportunity of accompanying a trader returning along that coast in a convenient vessel.

After leaving Boco del Toro, we visited the principal river of the Tiribees, a tribe of Indians who, at the instigation of the Mosquito king, are constantly at war with the Blancas and Talamancas, tribes in the interior, whom they hunt like wild beasts, and no emotions of pity prompt them to spare the aged of either sex: the young only are saved, and sold as slaves to the principal chiefs of the Mosquito nation. These Tiribees inhabit the country from the entrance of Boco del Toro Lagoon, to the river Banana; a small bay to the northward of which may be considered the boundary between them, and the two tribes above mentioned. These Blancas and Talamancas frequent the coast from thence to Salt Creek, for the purposes of hunting and fishing during the season, but have no permanent habitations on the shore.

The Tiribees are, as yet, far behind the Valientes and San Blas men, in point of civilization; but notwithstanding the inhuman, and selfish policy of the Mosquito men, in encouraging their savage habits, they manifest a strong disposition to follow the example of the more civilized Indians

who have intercourse with the British. It is only of late years that they have been drawn from their native mountains, by the example of the successful industry of the Valientes and others, to watch the bays for turtle, and collect sarsaparilla for the purposes of traffic. They are for the most part entirely in a state of nature, except some of the old people, who clothe themselves with the bark cloth formerly described, or the spathes of a particular species of palm-tree. They preserve, as trophies, and decorate their huts, with the skulls of their enemies; and every Tiribee who has vanquished a foe, perforates the centre of the under lip with a peculiar sort of white thorn, or fish bone about the size of a pin, adding a fresh one for every enemy they put to death; and I have seen some of the chief men with twenty, or thirty of these pins, their lips presenting the appearance of an inverted comb. They pressed me much to remain among them, and stated that their country abounded in vanilloes and sarsaparilla, of which, they offered to collect any quantity I might require.

If the baneful influence exercised by the Mosquito chiefs over these poor people was put an end to, it would add to the general happiness of themselves and the neighbouring tribes; and would tend greatly to their advancement in civilization. The hatred which all these Indians bear to the Spaniards, has prevented the Roman Catholic missionaries from penetrating their country; but I feel convinced that zealous and sensible missionaries, from England, would here find an ample field for their exertions, in a delightful country, among people who manifest the strongest de-

sire to promote an intercourse with the British. It is to be hoped that when these Indians become better known, their wants and desires will be attended to by those who have at heart the welfare of the human race.

From the Tiribee River to Monkey Point (Punta Chica) the last headland in the province of of Veragua, the distance is not more than eight or ten miles; it is easily known by a remarkably bluff rocky islet, distant only a few yards from the Mainland, from which it has the appearance of having been separated by some convulsion of nature. The islet itself is perforated in a remarkable manner through the middle in the shape of a high imperfect arch, under which there is room for a large boat to pass. A few people from the Corn Islands, under the direction of a Mr Forbes, have been induced to settle here: they live on friendly terms with the Tiribees, whose country is fertile, and as the coast is excellent for turtleing, it is to be hoped that, in many respects, they may do much good in civilizing the tribes in the neighuring country.

The Rio Culebras, or Snake River, is considered the boundary between the province of Veragua, and Costa Rica;—and, to the northward of this river, the Blancas, who are believed to be the fairest Indians in South America, sometimes repair, in large parties, for the purposes of hunting and fishing. They are a mild race, extremely shy, and obliged to be constantly on their guard against their enemies, the Tiribees and others, who on one occasion, when I was at Chiriqui Lagoon, fitted out, at the instigation of the Mosquito Admiral, ten large canoes on a kidnapping expedition

against them; but, after being absent several weeks, they returned, fortunately without having made a single captive.

Having on our passage kept close to the shore, we saw a party of these Blancos, who had constructed a hut on the sandy bay between Snake River and Grape Kay. We pulled through the surf, and landed opposite to their hut; but, the instant we were perceived, they fled into the woods; leaving a considerable quantity of dried wanree, peccary, and turtle meat, with which we did not interfere. I left a few beads, looking-glasses, fish-hooks, and other trifles—which, to them, would appear valuable—in a conspicuous part of the hut.

Between Matina and Monkey Point, the country, which is thinly inhabited, presents a beautiful appearance of hill and vale, well watered, but destitute of good harbours and headlands. The following are the names of rivers and places in this tract, viz. Rio Quemado, Point Caneta, De las Doraces, De Dios, Banana, Blanco Point, San Antonio, Lime Bight, Grape Kay, Salt Creek, and the small open roadstead of El Portete. The Blancos are said to have admitted Roman Catholic missionaries among them, who are supposed to prevent any intercourse with the traders; and to have assisted in bringing upon these Indians, the enmity of their neighbours, who hate the Spanish name.

Salt Creek is about twelve miles from Matina, which, with the small harbour of El Portete, may be called the sea-port of Cartago; the bay opposite to Matina River being nothing more than a wild open roadstead, where it is almost impossible

to land in an European boat: Salt Creek may be distinguished by several small islands lying off the point of land at the south end of the bay, from which it is not more than five or six miles distant. This is the principal resort of the contraband traders, when their cargoes cannot be landed at Matina River. That river has its source more than eighty miles in the interior; and it is joined, at about thirty miles from its mouth, by a tributary river, where the Spaniards have a fort, named Castillo de Austria; from whence, for about eight leagues, there is a road to an Embarcadero, or carrying place, about twelve miles from Salt Creek. The Americans from the United States, have regularly, but secretly, visited this port every season for the last ten years;—one house in New York annually sends three or four fast sailing schooners to their agent, a Mr Smith, at Salt Creek, who disposes of the cargo, and collects the proceeds, during the time schooners are running down the coast, trading with the Indians for tortoise-shell, copal and other gums, sarsaparilla, tasao, &c. This business is extremely lucrative to the Americans; who are enabled to dispose of a considerable quantity of Indian goods at such prices, as prevent the Jamaica traders from effectually competing with them.*

The city of Cartago is the capital of the province of Costa Rica; its estimated population, in 1823, was thirty-seven thousand, seven hundred and sixteen souls; but, about two years after that period, it was nearly destroyed by a tremendous earthquake, which shook the whole Isthmus of

* A list of goods adapted to this trade, and that of the whole coast, will be found in the Appendix.

Darien. On the night that this event took place, I was in an Indian house at Monkey Point, and had an opportunity of witnessing its effect on that part of the coast. About the middle of the night in question, I found the frame of the wicker bedstead on which I slept, shaken with very great violence; supposing that it was either my companion (one of the traders), or some of my Indian friends who wished to frighten, or awaken me suddenly, I rather angrily demanded, whether they meant to shake me to pieces? In a few seconds, however, the screams of the women, and the cries of the men, in the adjoining huts; together with the rolling motion of the earth, which was twisting the hut in all directions, put an end to my suspense. I instantly ran out of the place to the open air; and, although scarcely able to keep upon my feet from the rolling and trembling motions of the earth, I observed such a scene as will never to the last hour of my existence be erased from my memory. The ground under our feet seemed to heave convulsively, as if ready to open and swallow us, producing a low terrific sound; the trees, within a short distance of the huts, were so violently shaken from their upright position, that their branches were crashing, and their trunks grinding against each other, with a groaning sound; the domestic fowls, the parrots, macaws, pigeons, and other birds, were flying about and against each other, in amazement, screaming in their loudest and harshest tones: the shrieks of the monkeys, and the howlings of the beasts of the forest, which seemed as if approaching near us for protection, were mingled with the cries of the terrified Indians, and their domestic animals, every living

creature seeming to be overwhelmed with dismay. Although I had often contended with hurricanes, and storms at sea, I was utterly confounded by this unnatural scene, and it was some moments before I could rally my faculties sufficiently to think what should be done for my own preservation:—considering that the greatest danger would be in the event of the sea rising so high as to sweep the beach, I hastily roused my stupified companion; and, hurrying to our small vessel got her shoved off from the shore,—considering that she, at all events, would likely keep afloat; and we awaited the result, with fear and trembling. The shocks gradually became less violent; and, towards daybreak, had entirely subsided. No lives were lost here, or at the other Indian settlements, in the neighbourhood, but the ground appeared rent in various places, the sand on the beach was either raised in ridges, or depressed in furrows; a place, which in the evening had been a small lagoon, or pond, in which several canoes were floating, was now become quite dry; most of the huts were violently cracked and twisted; and the effects, of the earthquake, were everywhere visible. The Mosquito men, who were at this season on the coast, were so terrified, and overwhelmed with superstitious dread, that they abandoned the turtle fishery, and returned home before the season was half finished. *

*. The only persons in the neighbourhood not frightened by this event, were a trader, and some of his Indian friends, who were so intoxicated at the time it happened, that, until next morning, they were not aware that any extraordinary occurrence had taken place. They had a confused recollection that a puncheon of rum, which was

The mountain of Cartago is an active volcano, situated far back in the interior; it frequently emits fire and smoke, and is an excellent landmark to navigators—being seen, in sailing along the coast, at an immense distance.

From Matina, in proceeding along the shore, we meet with the two rivers Vasquez, and Azuelos; and to the northward of these, the Boca de la Portuga, or Turtle Bight:—at this place hundreds of the finest turtle are killed annually, merely for the sake of their manteca or fat, which is melted into oil, and used by the Indians, and others on the Mosquito Shore, as a substitute for butter. Most of the fishermen on their return from the southwards towards home, stop at this place for the purpose of procuring this oil, and turtles eggs; which latter are dried in the sun to preserve them:—and in this way many thousands of turtle are annually destroyed or prevented from coming to maturity.

During the months of April, May, June and July, the green turtle comes from various kays, and places a great many leagues distant, to several parts of the Mosquito Shore, especially to the sandy beaches in the vicinity of Turtle Bogue, to deposit their eggs. At this season, the sea is covered with what the fishermen call thimbles—a small blubber fish, in shape not unlike a tailor's thimble; these, and a peculiar sort of grass growing at the bottom of the sea, is their principal food. It is to be observed that the turtle have large lungs,

in the hut, could not be kept from rolling on the floor; but whether some person was trying to steal it from them, or it was endeavouring to run away of its own accord, they could not, at the time, determine.

and cannot go deeper in the water than five or six fathoms, being obliged to come frequently to the surface, for the purpose of *blowing*, as all fish do that have lungs. The male and female remain together about nine days, during which time the female feeds, and keeps in good condition; but, when they separate, the male is totally exhausted, worthless, and unfit for use as food. Sometime after this season, the female crawls up the sandy beaches, and prepares to lay her eggs; she makes a circle in the sand until it is fully prepared; she then digs a hole, about two feet deep, in which she deposits from sixty to eighty, covers them up, and goes off, generally before daybreak; about the fifteenth night afterwards, she returns, and deposits a similar number, near the same spot. The young turtle come out of the shell in about thirty-two days, and immediately make their way into the sea. Both the hawksbill and loggerhead turtle keep the same season; but, if a trunk turtle, a species of immense size, and exceedingly fat, is found dead on the beach, neither of them will lay their eggs within a mile of the place, for which reason that kind is never molested.

The handle of the spear with which the Indians *strike* the turtle, is made of very hard wood; the head is a triangular-shaped piece of notched iron, with a sharp point; a piece of iron is joined to this which slips into a groove at the top of the spear handle, and has a line attached to it which runs through eyes fixed, for that purpose, to the shaft of the spear to which a float is fastened. The Indians, when near enough to strike the turtle, raises the spear above his shoulder, and throws it, in such a manner, that it takes a circular direction

in the air, and lights, with its point downwards, on the back of the animal, penetrating through the shell, and the point becoming detached from the handle, remains firmly fastened in the creature's body; the float now shows on the surface of the water which way the turtle has gone; and he is easily hunted up, and secured, by means of the line, which has remained attached to the spear head.

The turtle has many other enemies which destroy both itself and its eggs;—such as the racoon, squash, fox, &c. The congar or American lion, and a species of black tiger, will also watch the turtle when coming to deposit its eggs, seize and haul it into the bush, and there, notwithstanding the coat of mail with which it is furnished by nature—destroy it at leisure.

I may here remark, that in the course of my excursions in the woods, on various parts of the coast I have met with these beasts of prey, and have also seen them at a distance, but they never shewed any disposition to attack me. When they did stand *at gaze* for a minute or two, it appeared more the effect of surprise than of a desire to spring forward or approach me; and the levelling of my rifle, or a flourish with my cutlass or moschcat, invariably made them steal off. On one occasion an acquaintance had, however, nearly fallen a sacrifice to one of these animals:—he was with a friend watching turtle near the beach, but having in the dusk of the evening retired for a few seconds into the bush, a very large tiger, of the black species, approached, unnoticed, to within a very few yards; fortunately the man's friend discovered the glaring eyes of the animal, and knowing the

unguarded position of the other, fired his piece at the animal, which sprung immediately into the bushes. Next morning they traced him by the marks of blood which he had left; and they found him dead in his lair, with one turtle half devoured, and the shells of another one lying beside him.

Pursuing our voyage from Turtle Bogue, we come to the Rio Colorado. Its entrance is wide, but there is too little water on the bar to admit ships of any size, otherwise there would be sufficient depth for that purpose inside. It takes its name from the muddiness of its waters, which discolour the ocean to a considerable distance; and, in the rainy season, they may be obtained fresh a long way out at sea. Its entrance may be easily found on the coast, by this discoloration, and by extensive green savannahs on its south bank.

A communication between it, and the great river de San Juan, (running out of the lake of Nicaragua,) takes place at a distance of about thirty miles from its mouth, by the branch Serapiqui. Its course in the interior is nearly parallel to the River San Juan, and is said to be joined by many streams having their sources in the mountains to the southward of the lake of Nicaragua. It enters the ocean about ten miles from the harbour of San Juan; but, in most charts, it is erroneously laid down at a much greater distance to the southward.

The next harbour, viz. that of San Juan de Nicaragua, is unquestionably the best for ships of war, or large vessels, on the whole range of coast between the Boco del Toro, and Cape Gracias a Dios—to which latter it is also superior in not being exposed to southerly winds. There is a

sufficient depth of water, and room, at the upper part, for fifteen or twenty sail of vessels of the largest class, besides smaller vessels; which, when there, would be completely land-locked.

Many of the fishermen, Indians and others, on their return from the southern fishing grounds, call in this neighbourhood, for the purpose of taking manatees, which are very plenty in the river, and in a creek at the upper end of the harbour. Hundreds of these fishermen remain to cure the meat, on the low sandy point, at the entrance of the harbour, without being molested by the Spaniards. This singular creature may be considered the connecting link between quadrupeds and fishes; it retains the fore-feet, or rather hands, of the former, with the tail of the latter—spreading out in a horizontal direction like a large fan. Beneath the skin, which is uncommonly hard and thick, there is a deep layer of very sweet fat. The meat in its thickest parts, has the singular property of being streaked throughout with alternate layers of fat and lean, being most excellent food. Persons subject to be afflicted with scorbutic, or scrofulous complaints, find speedy relief; by using it freely, their blood is said to become purified, and the virulence of the complaint is thrown to the surface of the body, and quickly disappears. The manatee is extremely acute in its sense of hearing, and immerges itself in the water on the slightest noise; it feeds on long shoots of tender grass growing on the banks of the rivers, and will rise nearly two-thirds of its length out of the water to reach its food; it is found only in the most solitary, and least frequented creeks, and rivers; the

male and female are generally together; their common length is from eight to twelve feet, and it weighs from five to eight hundred pounds weight: some of them are however much larger, weighing from twelve even to fifteen hundred weight. The Indians generally steal upon them early in the morning when they are feeding, and kill them with a harpoon; but, if the least noise is made in approaching, they immediately sink, and escape.

From the Rio de San Juan to Point de Gordo, a distance of between thirty and forty miles, the coast forms a large bay, into which flows the Rio Trigo, (Corn River), Indian River, and several smaller streams, some of which, in most of the charts of Jefferies, Lawrie, and Arrowsmith, are erroneously laid down as having communication, in the interior, with the River San Juan; for, although I have heard it reported on the coast that such a communication by Indian River does exist,—I never could trace the report to any authentic source; neither in the passage up and down the Rio San Juan, could I discover such a communication. Between Corn River and Point de Gordo, is Grindstone Bay, with anchorage in from four to five fathoms water. At a short distance from the coast the country here rises considerably; and, from the neighbourhood of San Juan to Bluefields, it is occupied by the Rama Indians, whose principal settlement is at Rama River, or Rio de Punta Gorda, a noble stream, which is said to have a course of about eighty miles, or upwards, from the interior, through a fertile country, and passing between two mountainous ridges at a short distance from the sea-shore. Its mouth may be known by a remarkably high, round, bar-

ren islet, laying about four miles distant off its entrance. The bay is shallow, but there is good anchorage under the lee side of Monkey Point, about four miles farther to the northward, a place which may be distinguished by its having several small islands and kays in its vicinity.

The country from San Juan River to this point abounds in vanilla * of the finest quality. This plant climbs with ease to the top of the highest tree. At a distance the leaves slightly resemble those of the vine; the flowers are of a white colour, intermixed with red and yellow, when these fall off, they are quickly succeeded by the pods, growing in bunches not unlike the plantain, and generally of the thickness of a child's finger. The pods are green at first, grow yellow, and finally brown; the method used to preserve the fruit, is to gather it when yellow, before the pods begin to open or burst;—it is then laid in small heaps for the space of three or four days to ferment. The fruit is afterwards spread in the sun to dry; and when about half dried, flattened with the hand, and rubbed over with cocoa, palm, or other oil:—it is once more exposed to the sun, to be fully dried, rubbed over with oil a second time, put in small parcels, and closely covered over with the dried leaves of the plantain or Indian reed. Care is taken not to allow the pods to remain upon the stalks too long before they are pulled, as, in that case, they transude a black fragrant balsam, which carries off both the smell and delicate flavour for which alone they are valued. The vanilla plant is also found on most

* Vanilla aromatica (Epidendrum vanilla of Linn.)

parts of the Mosquito Shore, and in the neighbourhood of Breo del Rero and Chiriqui Lagoons; it requires heat, moisture, and shade, to bring it to perfection, and when used in that state it gives a most delicious flavour to coffee, chocolate, &c., forming an important article of commerce, especially among the Spaniards. In the neighbourhood of the Lagoons and places last mentioned, a very fragrant bean, resembling, if not in reality, the true Tonquin bean, is also found. *

The Rama Indians were formerly numerous, but, at present, do not exceed five hundred; they are under subjection to the Mosquito King, to whom they pay an annual tax in tortoise-shell, canoes, hammocks, and cotton lines. The Ramas are considered mild, and inoffensive; they have little intercourse with other Indians; and, during the fishing season, seldom go to the southward of Matina; they are more expert in the management of canoes and other boats, than the Mosquito men, and will effect a landing in their barks, where the best European boats would meet certain destruction: their canoes and dories, are much broader, and shallower, than those generally used on the coast; they are also much more buoyant, and better adapted for landing in a heavy surf, or for crossing the bars of rivers. The Ramas, when engaged by the English settlers, have always proved very faithful servants. The source of the Rama River, is unknown to the settlers at Bluefields; but some of them have examined it for sixty

* We have been assured that the bean alluded to is the true *Baryosmo Tonga* of Gærtner—possessing the same flavour and other qualities as that brought from the East.—*Edit.*

or seventy miles, and assert that it runs through a country rather level, but having an appearance of very great fertility, and abounding in mahogany, locust, santa maria, and other valuable timber.

The several small kays and islets, which lay off this part of the coast, and that of Bluefields, are, like many places already noticed, much frequented by the Indians from all parts during the season for hawksbill turtle.

Bluefields is the next place of importance on the coast, and is said to derive its name from a celebrated English Captain of Buccaniers in the seventeenth century. For trading vessels of an easy draught of water, the upper lagoon is perhaps superior to any other harbour on the Mosquito Shore, being completely sheltered from all winds. There are two entrances; that to the southward, through Hone Sound, is very difficult, and dangerous even for small craft; the bar being generally covered with breakers, and having only four to five feet water:—but, the principal and only one for ships, is to the northward, close to the Bluff, a high rocky eminence, capable of being easily fortified, completely commanding the entrance, upon the bar of which, extending across to Deer Island, there is never less, but sometimes more, than fifteen feet water. After passing this bar, there is from four to six fathoms water. Close to the shore it continues deep, but it gradually shallows to three, and three and a half fathoms, which is the general depth throughout the upper and lower Lagoons. There are many banks, and shoals, about the entrances, but none of them dangerously situated for shipping; many of them are

dry at low water, and abundance of fine oysters can then easily be procured. The Lower Lagoon is full of small kays, or islets, and is from fifteen to twenty miles in length, having sufficient depth of water for vessels of considerable burthen, but the channels are intricate, and only known to the settlers at Bluefields.

The Upper Lagoon, which is a continuation of the Lower, is not more than a mile broad at its entrance, but its width, farther up, increases to five or six miles; and, into it, the great river of Nueva Segovia of the Spaniards, and several smaller ones, empty themselves.

The lands bordering on all these rivers are extremely rich and fertile, capable of growing cotton, cocoa, coffee, sugar, and all the different kinds of produce raised in the British West Indies. The forests abound in cedar of the largest description, mahogany, and many other valuable woods.

The pine Savannahs, bordering on Bluefields, and pearl kay lagoons, can furnish an inexhaustible supply of the very finest pitch pine timber, some of it fit for the largest masts.

Colonel Hodgson, the British Superintendant, resided at this place for a number of years, during the time the English held possession of the Mosquito Shore, and he had extensive mahogany works on the banks of the principal river, and a very considerable trade was carried on with the Spaniards and Creoles in the interior. This active and intelligent gentleman, had also extensive grants of land at Black River, and left the Mosquito Shore with much regret, at the time when the extraordinary policy of the British Government compelled their settlers to abandon that

country in the year 1786. He spent a great portion of his life on this coast; * and the old Indians still speak of their former Governor, with respect, and marks of regret, that no accredited person now resides among them.

Previous to his leaving Bluefields, several of his slaves and people who were established in the interior, refused to leave the place. These people and their descendants, who are Mulattoes and Samboes, are settled at the southernmost extremity of the harbour, about nine miles from its principal entrance, and they have considerably increased in numbers since Colonel Hodgson's time. They live without fear of molestation from the Indians, none of whom reside within many miles of them; and, although it is not acknowledged as such by the British Government, it may be truly considered a British settlement. It is principally under the influence of two intelligent young men, who claim affinity to the late superintendent. The river of Bluefields, or Rio de Nuevo Segovia, rises in the country possessed by the Spaniards, within fifty or sixty miles of the South Sea, and has a course of several hundred miles; but few of the present people at Bluefields have ascended its course to any great height. The Cookra and Woolwa tribes of Indians, who are settled on its banks, at a considerable distance in the interior, are a quiet peaceable race of people, on good terms with the Ramas, and the people at Bluefields Lagoons. They possess very little energy, and are often enslaved, or murdered, by the Indians resi-

* See "Some Account of the Mosquito Territory, &c. from the original manuscripts of the late Colonel Robert Hodgson," 2d Edition. Edinburgh, 1822.

dent about Great River, whom I shall afterwards have occasion to notice.

These Indians occasionally descend the river, to the settlements at Bluefields, bringing peccary, warree, iguanas, and other provisions.

Bluefields, with its excellent harbour, protected by a rocky, bluff point, capable of being made almost impregnable, is in an excellent situation for opening a communication across the country to the Lakes of Nicaragua, and possesses such other advantages as a commercial station, that, sooner or later, it must become a place of very considerable importance.

CHAPTER V.

PEARL KAYS AND LAGOON—OYSTERS—EUROPEAN SETTLERS—STORES—TRADERS—CLIMATE, PRODUCE—RIO GRANDE, OR PRINZAPULKO—INDIANS AND CHIEF MEN—PINE SAVANNAHS—MACAWS—SOIL—HORSES—IRON—CAPTIVE INDIAN BOY—CRUEL EXPEDITIONS AGAINST THE COOKRAS—PRINZAPULKO RIVER AND INDIANS—CONTRACTS WITH THE WOOLWAS—TONGULAS—CAPTAIN TARRA—BROWN—RETURN TO PEARL KAY LAGOON.

From Bluefields, to Pearl Kay Lagoon, the distance is about thirty miles: a moderately elevated headland, named False Bluefields, is the only high land on the coast, until we reach Brangmans, or Branckmans Bluff, called by the Spaniards Monte Gordo; it consists of three or four moderately high hills, of a light red colour, rising almost perpendicularly from the beach; they are composed of stiff clay, and extend along the shore for nearly two miles, falling off at each end with a gentle slope terminating in the savannah. About half a

mile to the southward of the bluff, there is good anchorage. The soil in the neighbourhood of the bluff is sandy, yet covered with verdure; and there are several tall pine trees close to them, under the shade of which, a "king's house," similar to those before mentioned, had been erected for the convenience of travellers, there being now no Indian resident here, although at one time there was a small British settlement near it.

The entrance to Pearl Kay Lagoon is little more than a quarter of a mile in width, and is at the bottom, or south end of the bay, over a bar, on which there is about ten feet water. The safest anchorage for vessels is under the north side, off which, there are several small islands, kays, and reefs, on which pearl oysters are said to have been found. Moreover, these places are called the *Pearl* Kays, but, for what reason, I never could ascertain, as there is certainly no pearl oysters, or oysters of any kind that I could discover, upon them, or on the reefs by which they are surrounded; although, in the Lagoon, there are abundance of good oysters, on banks, many of which are dry at low water. These oysters are in bunches of about eight or ten in each bunch; they are rather larger than the mangrove oyster, but of a different kind from those in the Bay of Panama, and other places producing pearls. I have frequently examined the oysters found in the Lagoon, but never could discover pearls in any of them; and I mention this more particularly, because, since my return to England, I found, that these reports, and the blind zeal of certain ignorant speculators, had induced one of the compe-

nies recently formed in London for Foreign Adventure, to determine on sending a vessel, which was in fact ready to depart, to this quarter to fish for pearls; but, on informing them of the truth, they altered her destination.

There are several islands in Pearl Kay Lagoon, some of them from one to three miles in circumference; and, in some instances, they are used for raising ground provisions. Several rivers and considerable streams fall into it, the principal of which is Wawashaan, about twenty-five miles to the northward of the entrance. On the banks of the Wawashaan, about eleven miles from the place where it discharges itself, Mr Ellis, a French gentleman, has established a very neat plantation. When the island of San Andres, off this coast, was given up to the Spaniards, he was Governor there; and he, with Mr Goffe, their families, and followers, retired to the present settlement, where they justly considered themselves perfectly safe from the Spaniards, and, having obtained a grant of land from one of the late kings of the Mosquito Shore, they proceeded to cultivate it. By his own exertions, and the aid of about twenty negroes, men, women, and children, Mr Ellis has succeeded in establishing a plantation of coffee, cotton, and sugar-cane, that for beauty and regularity, may vie with any of the same extent in the island of Jamaica. His attention was first directed to the cultivation of coffee and cotton; but finding that rum would be a more profitable article, he, about eight years ago, commenced its distillation; and, when I left the coast, he was in the habit of retailing twenty or thirty puncheons annually, at

an immense profit. Mr Goffe, whose settlement is at Jupiter's Head, or Old Bank, a few miles from Wawashaan, and near the Lagoon, has turned his attention more to the raising of stock, and cultivation of ground provisions. He has a great number of bullocks, hogs, goats, and poultry of all kinds; with abundance of yams, cassava, plantains, and Indian corn, which he sells to the traders, settlers, and occasional visitors. Mr Ellis may, however, be said to be the only planter on the whole coast, according to the West Indian acceptation of the term; but there are many situations which, in point of soil, and other local advantages, are far preferable to the one he occupies.

There are few settlements of Mosquito Indians, and Samboes, at Kirkaville and Rigmans Bank, on the borders of the Lagoon; but the principal settlement, is at a place, about six miles to the southward of the entrance, and being composed of people similar to those at Bluefields, it may also be considered an English settlement. The people are principally Creoles, Mulattoes, and Samboes from Jamaica, San Andres, and the Corn Islands; many of them have married Indian women, and, every thing considered, they live in a very comfortable manner. Their place of residence, consisting of thirty or forty houses, is called English Bank, and faces the shore of the Lagoon. The population may be about one hundred and fifty or two hundred souls, living in very neat compact houses of one story high, the sides for the most part made of clay, beaten down hard into a framework of lath and hardwood posts, and roofed with a durable species of palm leaf. The Jamaica

traders have established two stores for the sale of goods among them, and there is also one supplied from the United States; the agents in charge of these stores constantly reside at English Bank, and are visited by different tribes of Indians, and by Mosquito-men, from all parts of the coast; bringing tortoise-shell, gum copal, caouchouc, &c.; skins, paddles, canoes, and various articles to barter for duck, check, cutlass blades, and other goods adapted for the Indian trade. The inhabitants employ themselves in turtleing during the season, and in raising provisions, hunting, and fishing, during the remainder of the year. They maintain a friendly correspondence with the regular Indians; are, in general, fair and honourable in their dealings with them, and with each other, and are truly hospitable to those Europeans or other strangers who happen to come amongst them. They are however without any religious instruction, and I have again to lament that no missionary has hitherto visited this part of the coast; where, although he might, at first, meet with a little occasional opposition from the *visiting* traders, he would ultimately do much good; and I may venture, at all events, to affirm, that he would not meet with that discouragement, which has lately been experienced by his brethren in the more civilized colonies of Barbadoes and Demerara.

I never knew an instance of a marriage being celebrated among them, according to the prescribed forms of the English, or of any other church; these engagements are mere tacit agreements, which are sometimes, although rarely, broken by mutual consent. The children here, and at Blue-

fields, are in general baptised by the captains of trading vessels from Jamaica; who, on their annual return to the coast, perform this ceremony with any thing but reverence, on all who have been born during their absence; and many of them are indebted to these men for more than baptism. In proof of this, I could enumerate more than a dozen of acknowledged children, of only two of these captains, who seem to have adopted, without scruple, the Indian idea of polygamy in its fullest extent. By this licentious and immoral conduct they have, however, so identified themselves with the natives, and with some of the principal people on the coast, as to obtain a sort of monopoly in the sale of goods, which it would be difficult for any stranger, not possessed of an intimate knowledge of the Indian character, to shake; they have also so insinuated themselves into the good graces of the leading men, that their arrival on the coast is hailed with joy by all classes, as the season of festivity, revelry, christening, and licentiousness. Funerals are however conducted with decency and comparative propriety; Mr Ellis, or one of the agents of the traders, with the old men of the place, generally give their attendance on these solemn occasions. Notwithstanding that they live in this free manner without fixed laws or religious restraint, they, in absence of the traders, maintain an order and regularity, that would not lose by comparison, with any of the small provincial towns in England. In cases of dispute, a reference to the arbitration of some of the elders, or to their general friend Mr Ellis, decides the matter at once. Mr Ellis has done much good both among the

mixed residents, and the Indians; and has, on many occasions, given the strongest proofs of a most kind, and benevolent disposition. In common with every person who has visited the settlement, or resided in its vicinity, I have experienced his attentions; and have much pleasure in thus acknowledging the great personal obligations which he thereby conferred upon me.

During the short time that the British were fixed on this part of the Mosquito Shore, under the superintendancy of Colonel Hodgson, many persons became settlers here; and, if the British Government had not withdrawn their protection, the vicinity of Pearl Kay Lagoon would now have been covered with flourishing plantations. The climate is good; and, on the whole, with common care, and a small exertion of industry, the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life, may be easily procured. The country and Lagoon abounds in all the kinds of game and fish peculiar to the country and coast. The Mosquito men, Ramas, and other Indians, hire themselves to the settlers at Bluefields, and Pearl Kay Lagoon, as hunters and strikers of fish, at the rate of four or five dollars a month, paid in goods; and they always cover the board of their employer with an ample supply of fish, game, and other provisions; the Ramas or other pure Indians are always preferred, for this purpose, to the mixed breeds. The value of these men, in the capacity above mentioned, was well known to the old Buccaniers, who had always some of them attached to their expeditions, even as far as the South Sea, to which they were frequently guided, by these Indians, across the continent.

Pearl Kay Lagoon is of considerable magnitude; one part of it reaching to within eight miles of Great River, or Rio Grande; its greatest winding length, from north-east, to south-west, cannot be far short of sixty miles, or its breadth from sixteen to twenty. The Indians, in bad weather, instead of keeping along the sea-coast, enter Pearl Kay Lagoon by hauling their canoes over the narrow neck of land between it and Bluefields Lagoon; and, at the upper end of it, they have another haulover of about two hundred yards, into the ocean.

In many places on the banks of the Lagoon, indigo grows spontaneously, but the richest land is generally to be found on the high ground, and banks of rivers, remote from the coast.

The Cookras, a tribe of Indians, now nearly extinct, formerly resided on the banks of some of the rivers falling into this lagoon; and they had formerly a settlement on the banks of the Wawashaan river, but they abandoned it shortly after the arrival of Mr Ellis. Remaining some time at Pearl Kay Lagoon, I proceeded to Rio Grande and Prinzapulko, (I give the last name according to the pronunciation), being the best places for obtaining the large canoes wanted.

Rio Grande enters the ocean about thirty miles to the northward of the entrance to Pearl Kay Lagoon; its entrance being completely exposed to north-east winds, is extremely dangerous; and, although it is a noble stream, there is not more than four or five feet water over its bar:—It is said to be navigable for boats, nearly two hundred miles, and its source is totally unknown to the English.

There are several small islands inside the bar, but there is no island off its entrance as stated by some writers. There are several settlements of Indians on its banks, chiefly within a few miles distance from its entrance; they are subject to the Mosquito King, to whom they pay tribute; but, like every other tribe of unmixed Indians, they are discontented with the authority assumed over them by the Mosquito men, or Samboes.

Their headmen, Drummer and Dalbis, two brothers, possess considerable influence over them, and the other Indians adjoining, on the Prinzapulko and Rio Grande settlements.

The late Mosquito King had the good policy to bestow the title of "Governor" on Drummer, "Admiral" on Dalbis, and "Captain" on the headman at Prinzapulko; the latter being also an Indian of unmixed breed. I proceeded to Governor Drummer's settlement, which is about eight miles from the mouth of the river, on one of its branches, close to an extensive and beautiful pine savannah. This house is a large building divided into three apartments; close to it, stood a shed for cooking, and other domestic purposes. It is situated on a rising ground, at a short distance from the river, and surrounded by twenty or thirty other houses of smaller dimensions. I found it tolerably well furnished with tables, benches, stools, crockery ware, glass, &c.; and, every thing in and about it wore the appearance of a comparatively well regulated, and comfortable abode. Its owner received me with the greatest cordiality, and, sending to make inquiries among his people, soon gave me to understand that I could procure

six such canoes as I wanted, here, and at a little distance; and also that he could procure me a quantity of tortoise-shell—in short, to use his own words, that I should be treated "true English gentleman fashion."

For all this kindness I was in some measure indebted to a few gallons of rum which I had brought, and it was intimated, that I had better rest from the fatigues of the voyage, and leave business until next day. In the meantime, the goods and rum were carefully removed from the dorie to an apartment in the house; and, in a short time, a repast was served consisting of fish, flesh, fowl, and fruit, which, if properly cooked, would not have disgraced the table of an alderman. In the afternoon I had a long walk into the savannah, which is pretty closely covered with detached clumps of pitch pine trees of all ages and sizes: the trunks of many of them being from sixty to eighty feet in height, without a branch, the greater part of considerable girth, and perfectly straight. Toward sunset, innumerable flights of macaws, and parrots were seen coming from all quarters, to roost in these trees near the houses; and, the continued noise, made at this time, and at their departure in the morning, gave no bad idea of an English rookery: they are fond of harbouring near the Indians, who never molest them. Several horses were grazing in the savannah, but no black cattle—these are kept, as I afterwards learnt, in the interior, at the provision grounds.

On my return to the house, I found the principal people of the settlement waiting for me; and as I knew they had adopted the ideas of the Mos-

quito men, who judge of a trader by his liberality in supplying them with their favourite beverage, I requested Drummer to use my rum bottles, as if they were his own; and, in consequence, all were soon in a state of intoxication.

Early in the morning I called up Nelson, one of Drummer's sons, to join me in a ride through part of the savannah. He soon caught a couple of horses which seemed accustomed to be mounted, but for a bridle, we had only a small piece of rope; and a thick mat made of dried plantain leaves, without the appendage of stirrups, served for a saddle.

I found the savannah intersected by numerous paths, mostly of a fine sandy nature, in various directions leading, as Nelson informed me, to the hunting and provision grounds of the people attached to his father, his uncle, and the Admiral; each of whom had several wives, resident chiefly at their different plantations.

The soil of the savannah appears to consist of micacious sand and gravel, some spots being entirely without vegetation, and quite bare. I may here observe, that all the pine savannahs in the neighbourhood of the sea, on the Mosquito Shore, are sandy, and, comparatively speaking, barren; while the soil of the savannahs in the interior is of a much richer quality:—in consequence, the inhabitants on the coast are obliged to have their provision grounds, and plantain walks, on the banks of rivers, or streams, many miles up from the sea; with the exception however, of cassava, which, thriving on a sandy soil, can be planted close to the coast settlements. In this respect, the coun-

try of the Valientes Tiribees and Ramas is decidedly superior to that occupied by the Mosquito men and their immediate neighbours.

We observed the tracks of several deer on the sandy paths; and, on mentioning the sparkling appearance of the sand, which in some places shone like filings of steel, Drummer assured me, that, in one part of this extensive savannah, about thirty miles from his settlement, natural iron could be procured in considerable quantity;—but as I saw no specimen of the metal, I only mention the circumstance as worthy of investigation.

My host had provided an excellent breakfast, but complained that last night's debauch had "spoiled his head," a common expression of the Mosquito men, who, unlike the Indians to the southward, have no objection to "spoil their heads" whenever they can by any means procure rum. During breakfast my attention was attracted by the peculiarly interesting, and expressive appearance of an Indian boy, about seven years of age. Nelson informed me, that, on one of their predatory expeditions, about three months ago, they had suddenly come upon a canoe, containing this boy, with his little sister and their father: the man leapt overboard and escaped by swimming, but the poor children were seized, and brought away as slaves.

I may here observe, that the whole of the Indians of these settlements, instigated by the infernal policy of the Mosquito chiefs, used, formerly, to make frequent incursions upon the neighbouring tribes of Cookras, Woolwas, and Toacas, bordering on the Spanish territory,—for the sole purpose of seizing and selling them for slaves to the

settlers, and chief men on different parts of the Mosquito Shore. Much misery has here resulted to these poor people, who, although now seldom annoyed, have withdrawn themselves far into the interior; and hold very little intercourse with the Indians on the coast. The Cookras are now seldom seen; the Woolwas have also retired from the coast, and their settlements are on the upper branches of the rivers Nueve Segovia, Rio Grande, and others, at a considerable distance from those of the *Coast* Indians and Mosquito men. Drummer had, in his early years, been an intolerable scourge to these inland tribes, and, to the Woolwas in particular, some hundreds of whom had been, from first to last, captured by him and his parties, and sold as slaves. His method was, to steal upon, and, if possible, in the absence of the males, surprise the temporary settlements or residences of the small roving parties moving about the heads of the rivers spoken of, seize the women and children, and effect his retreat, if possible, without fighting. In some instances, these kidnappers have gone as far back as the settlements of the Spaniards and Spanish Creoles, whose wives and children they have not hesitated to carry off, and appropriate to their own use. A circumstance of this kind occurred while I was resident on the Shore. One of the sons of Drummer not meeting with the Indians, of whom they were in search, penetrated to the back settlements of the Spaniards,—on their retreat down the river they surprised a dorie, containing a Spanish Creole, his wife, and two children; the man saved his own life by instant flight, but the woman, far advanced in pregnancy, and the children,

were seized, carried to Pearl Kay Lagoon, and offered for sale to Mr Ellis. That gentleman, much to his honour, not only declined to buy them, but having got them into his house, refused to deliver them up to their captors, treated the poor woman, who was delivered in his house of a fine boy, with the greatest humanity and attention; and by his influence with the Mosquito king, and considerable exertion, got them restored to their family and friends, for which humane conduct he received the thanks of the Spanish authorities of the district to which they belonged. Many other instances of this good man's exertions in the cause of humanity could be related.

I repeat, that it is more through the diabolical instigation of the Mosquito chiefs, than any cruelty of disposition on the part of the pure Indians, that these inhuman outrages are committed against those who would otherwise be considered in every sense of the word their brethren; but, as the influence of the Mosquito chiefs is daily decreasing, these cruel proceedings will gradually cease.

In my own mind I had often resolved the possibility of ascending some of the greater rivers for the purpose of ascertaining their course, the nature of the country, and the manners and condition of the tribes in the interior,—the proximity of Bluefield's River to the Lakes of Nicaragua, Leon and the South Sea,—and whether there were any considerable tribes in the interior, among whom new sources of trade could be opened; and, I had wished to procure one of these captives, whom I intended, by kind treatment and education, to attach to me, so that he might assist me as a guide and interpreter among his countrymen.

On mentioning this to Drummer, he readily offered to sell me the little Woolwa, above mentioned, for twenty pounds; to secure him, I was obliged to part with nearly the whole of my wearing apparel, which had, accidentally, been seen and coveted by Nelson;* and, although I was afterwards obliged to part with this youth under particular circumstances, I have the satisfaction to hope his situation has been bettered by my interference.

Dalbis having agreed to accompany me to Prinzapulko River, about thirty miles distant, I paid for the three dories, and the tortoise-shell which I had purchased, and we left the settlement about sunset,—with easy paddling we arrived at Prinzapulko River next morning early, and were well received by the headman "Captain" Tarra. Although a fine stream, it has, like Rio Grande, a dangerous bar, with only about four feet water over it. The Indians, who are settled on its left bank, about seven miles up from the sea, and on the banks of a small lake about ten miles distant from this station, are, in number, something more than one hundred;—they are the same race of people as those at Great River; but, unlike Drummer, the chiefs here, have found it their interest to encourage and protect, rather than oppress, the Woolwas and Dongulas of the interior; and, in consequence, they carry on a small trade in canoes, dories, and pittpans, which these tribes bring down the river roughly formed or blocked out, and they are afterwards neatly finished, and

* Nelson was, some time after this transaction, killed by the Woolwas in a predatory excursion against them.

decorated for sale. The great size of these canoes, formed out of the trunk of a single tree of cedar, or mahogany, is a proof of the immense timber which grows in their country; and, of the valuable trade that might be carried on with them, were they protected from the Mosquito men, and encouraged to visit the coast. I have known some of these canoes above thirty-five feet long, about five feet deep, and nearly six feet broad. I found that those made of mahogany are best for working to windward under a press of sail; but that those of cedar are more buoyant, and do not sink even when full of water and partly loaded.

When the Prinzapulko Indians are desirous of procuring a vessel of the largest dimensions, the contract is made by giving the Indian with whom they agree, a piece of twine or packthread, on which is marked, by knots, the length, breadth, and depth of the vessel wanted: The Indian is at the same time furnished in advance, with two or three axes, adzes, and other articles, to the value of about one fourth of the price agreed on,—and he delivers a duplicate of these dimensions, together with a piece of silk grass, with knots upon it, corresponding to the number of days in which he has agreed to fulfil his contract. One of these knots is cut off, or unloosed daily; and when they are reduced to the last, they can with certainty reckon upon the immediate appearance of the contractor, or his friends; and in case of death, or accident, the latter invariably consider themselves bound to fulfil the agreement.

The headman at Prinzapulko, has great influence with these Indians of the interior. An intelligent native, named Brown, has also been very

instrumental in encouraging the country Indians to bring their rough dories and other articles to Prinzapulkó for sale; and they now visit this place in preference to any other on the coast. In exchange for these rough blocks, and such other articles as they have for sale, they receive old axes, adzes, beads, looking-glasses, and other articles of a similar description. There can be little doubt, that, by establishing proper depôts among them, new sources of wealth might be discovered in the interior, and a valuable trade might be opened with the Spanish settlements.

Brown, the Indian above mentioned, accompanied me on several trading voyages, and I always found him faithful and trustworthy, even in situations of the most trying nature.

Having arranged with Tarra for three dories, and a small quantity of tortoise-shell, I returned to Great River (Rio Grande), and from thence, after having agreed at both places to become the purchaser of their next season's collection of tortoise shell, I removed with the craft I had purchased, and my young Woolwa, who appeared pleased at getting out of the hands of his captors, to Pearl Kay Lagoon, intending to return from thence, to my residence at Chrico Mola, by one of the trading vessels from Jamaica, expected to call, as usual, at English Bank on her way down the coast. On my arrival at the Lagoon, I proceeded to my friend Mr Ellis at Wawashaan; and, I was again received by him with his usual kindness, and hospitality.

In a few days afterwards the traders with whom I had in some measure connected myself, arrived

at English Bank; and, on their coming up to Wawashaan, I could easily perceive by the coolness of their behaviour to me, that the activity of my proceedings had excited their avaricious jealousy, which keeps them at all times on the watch, and ready to crush every person likely to break in upon their trade. As a proof of the extent of this concealed, and strictly secret trade, I may mention, without fear of contradiction, that one trader alone generally has goods, tortoise-shell, and outstanding debts, at the different depôts along the coast, never amounting to less than between five and six thousand pounds sterling in value. By artfully connecting himself with some of the leading natives in the manner already stated, he contrives not only to receive the whole proceeds of their exertions; but, by some manœuvre or other, keeps the Indians constantly indebted to him, and his party, however great may be their success, in fishing, or otherwise.

It might be tedious and uninteresting to narrate all the occurrences which now induced me to separate myself from their interests:—suffice it to say, that, having successfully used great exertions to forward their views, in the reasonable hope that they would consider me entitled to share in the profits of my own labours, I was very much disappointed to find this was quite contrary to their policy: and, indignant at such treatment, I determined on endeavouring to interest more liberal and enlightened people in the plans which I had conceived for trade and discovery. With this intention I determined, instead of returning to Chrico Mola, to proceed to the northward; and, trust to the honesty of old Jasper, and my friend Whykee

Tara, to protect my property there, until I should be able to reclaim it, rather than return with these traders, whose demands upon me, I settled to within a mere trifle, for which balance they insisted on taking the young Woolwa in pledge.

Being, in every sense of the word, entirely in their power, I was obliged, for the time, to submit to this revolting measure, upon a promise, that my views in regard to his education, and treatment, should be adopted; and in the hope that I should shortly be able to reclaim him, out of their hands.

CHAPTER VI.

ADMIRAL EARNEE—TRIBUTE—KING'S HOUSES—TOWKA INDIANS—PARA LAGOON—BRANCMAN'S BLUFF — SAVANNAHS — DEER — SANDY BAY—CONVERSATIONS WITH THE INDIANS—ARRIVAL, RECEPTION, AND CHARACTER OF THE MOSQUITO KING — COUNCIL — MUSIC AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS—HISTORY OF DON CARLOS AND GOVERNOR CLEMENTI—SOIL AND PRODUCE—MARL—PIPE CLAY—JOURNEY TO CAPE GRACIAS A DIOS.

In pursuance of my determination to proceed to the northward, I quitted Pearl Kay Lagoon, and, returning, by Rio Grande, to Prinzapulko, I there, according to my expectation, met Admiral Earnee, one of the three principal chiefs of the Mosquito Shore, who had been as far to the southward as Boco del Toro collecting the King's tribute. He came to Prinzapulko in a large boat or dorie, attended by others of a smaller description; and was received by Captain Tarra, Brown, and other natives, who conducted him to the King's house, with every mark of respect. He is a complete black, or negro, without the least appearance of Indian blood; but I found him to be, when sober,

a sensible, shrewd, and intelligent man, a descendant from some of the Sambo negroes, who were, many years ago, wrecked on this coast. As he had announced the day when he should arrive here, preparations had been made for him and about twenty-five people his attendants, who were amply supplied with provisions, and feasted at the King's house. The tribute was also in readiness, the principal part in tortoise-shell; a single *back* of shell being demanded from every canoe employed in turtleing during the season. The same value in dories, hammocks, or coarse cotton cloth of the country being exacted from those canoes employed in any other manner.

In reference to the King's houses; it is necessary to observe, that the principal settlements of the Samboes and their immediate allies, form a chain of hamlets, at certain distances, from one end of the Mosquito Shore *proper*, to the other; and, in each of these, a house called the King's, is erected by the joint labour of the community, and appropriated for the reception of the King, or his officers, when they visit the settlement. In it, also, the headman of the settlement, or one of the three principal chiefs who govern the coast, decide controversies, and frame laws and regulations, which are afterwards sanctioned by the King before being carried into effect. Some of these houses are of considerable size, and built with great care and solidity.

So soon as Earnee knew my intention of visiting the King, he offered me every assistance in his power; and, after remaining a few days at Prinzapelko, I accompanied him on his journey to the

Cape. We left the settlement at midnight with the land breeze down the river. This breeze generally begins to blow off the shore about sunset, and continues until about ten o'clock next morning. Finding a dangerous sea running on the bar, Earnee, myself, and some of his attendants, landed at the mouth of the river, and proceeded along the coast towards Tongula Lagoon, leaving the rest of the people in the dories, to endeavour to make their passage by sea. We crossed the river leading to the Lagoon, and continued our journey until the sea breeze should begin to blow down the coast; and we remained, at one of the King's houses, erected, for the convenience of travellers, at a small distance from the sea-bank, about half way between Prinzapulko and Wava Lagoon, near *a haulover*, of about five hundred yards in length, into the Tongula Lagoon, where the canoes joined us.

There are a few Mosquito men, and Tongula Indians, settled at this place; but no white people, nor their descendants,—we were plentifully supplied with provisions and other refreshments by the natives.

In the evening, the canoes were again launched, but the Admiral, myself, and a few others, continued our journey along the beach as before; and, about midnight, we arrived on the banks of the Wava River, leading to a considerable lagoon, of the same name; here we found a canoe had been left to convey us across the river, which is of considerable width, but the bar is both shallow and dangerous: a heavy sea falls on the coast, rendering the approach to it very unsafe, there being be-

veral shoals, and small kays, either very innaccurately laid down, or not at all noticed in the charts.

Considerable numbers of Towka Indians reside on the banks of a large river which empties itself into the Wava Lagoon; and is said to have its source upwards of 150 miles in the interior. At a small distance from Wava Lagoon, is Para Lagoon, connected with it by a considerable stream; and, near Para, is the residence of "the governor," one of the three principal chiefs of the country.

Having crossed Para River, we proceeded to Brancman's Bluff, and from one of the heights of that place we had a most extensive view of the country, which, as far as the eye can reach, is all low savannah land, covered with coarse long grass, and occasional pine ridges, with remarkably large, and fine, timber. This is the case with most of the savannah land, on the coast of the Mosquito Shore; the only exception being, that some of the *very low* land is covered with water, during the rainy season, producing only rank coarse grass, and mohoe bushes.

The country about Brancmans abounds in deer; —one of them having been seen, from the heights, feeding in the savannah, an Indian stripped off all his clothes; and, keeping to leeward, watching its motions, he continued creeping towards it on his hands and feet, remaining motionless, except when it put down its head to graze; he got within about fifty yards; and then, easily brought it down with a rifle ball. The Indians divided it amongst them, reserving some of the best parts for our supper.

It is a singular circumstance, that from the last quarter's ebb to the first quarter's flood, these deer

are fond of grazing on the coast, a little above high watermark: I often availed myself of this circumstance; and, in passing up and down the coast, have landed at this point, and, by partly adopting the Indian plan, never failed to procure venison.

In the middle of the night we again launched the dories; after passing the Bluff, the land trends away considerably to the westward, and we gained a good offing so as to enable us, when the sea-breeze set in, to use our sails. There is only one river of any magnitude between Brancmans and Duckwarra, which we passed; and we arrived at Sandy Bay about eleven o'clock, being now distant from Cape Gracias a Dios, about thirty miles.

At the southermost part of Sandy Bay is the entrance to a small Lagoon, on the borders of which is a principal settlement of the Mosquito Indians, where the King frequently resides; it is close to the Lagoon, about eight miles from its entrance, and in the vicinity of a savannah, similar to those already described. The Lagoon has a communication with Wano or Warner's sound; but no river, of any consequence, falls into either of these places.

On our arrival, the Admiral was met and welcomed by the principal people: English colours were hoisted, as the signal of festivity; we were informed, that a canoe having arrived from the Cape, with information that the King was on his way to visit the settlement, and having met the Admiral, preparations were making for a grand feast and mishlaw drink. For this purpose the whole population were employed,—most of them being engaged collecting pine apples, plantains,

bananas, and cassava, for their favourite liquor. The expressed juice of the pine apple is alone a pleasant and agreeable beverage. The mishlaw from the plantain and banana, is also both pleasant and nutritive; that from the cassava and maize, is more intoxicating; but its preparation, is an operation so disgusting, that, did I not consider it an imperative duty to suppress nothing that tends to elucidate the manners, and habits, of these different tribes, and their still great distance from civilization, I should pass it over, without notice. The method of preparing it, is as follows. The root of the cassava, after being mashed, and peeled, is boiled to the same consistence, as when to be used for food. On its being taken from the fire, the water is poured off, and the roots allowed to cool. The pots were then surrounded by all the women, old and young, who, being provided with large wooden bowls, commenced an attack upon the cassava, which they chewed to a consistance of thick paste, and then put their mouthfuls into the bowls before them, until these vessels were filled; the bowls were then carried to the king's house, and the contents tumbled into a new canoe which had been hauled up from the landing-place, and put there for that purpose, there being no cask in the settlement sufficiently capacious. I observed that some few of the young men also joined in the masticating process, which was continued with much perseverance, until the joint produce of the wooden bowls, from every house in the settlement, had filled the canoe about one third. Other cassava was then taken, and bruised in a kind of large wooden mortar, with a wooden pestle, to a consistence of dough, which

[illegible] water, to which
[illegible] partly boiled
[illegible] as the cassava;
[illegible] the cause, which
[illegible] frequently
[illegible] hours, it was
[illegible] fermentation.
[illegible] boiled, was
[illegible] fermentation;
[illegible] covered with
[illegible] fermentation,
[illegible] liquor
[illegible] health,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] his
[illegible] removed;
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

ments, which he had been visiting, transact public business, and get drunk.

The King's house, Earnee's, a Samboe chief designated *General Blyatt*, with a few others, were tolerably large, similar to that of governor Drummer, and tolerably well furnished with benches, tables, plates, glasses, basins, knives and forks, and other articles. A hammock was hung up in the Admiral's house for each of his guests, according to custom; and, after a great deal of conversation about the state of the country, the customs, strength, and trade of the different settlements, and the general policy of the Mosquito-men, I retired to rest, pleased with the attention shown to me, but rather puzzled and alarmed, by the magnitude of the preparations, for the approaching feast.

The Admiral, during our journey up from Prinzapulko had related several anecdotes of the King, and had given me some knowledge of his character. The Admiral seemed to regret the King's want of attention to the real interests of his country; his too great partiality for liquor and women: his extreme levity, and, the facility with which he associated with, and listened to, every visionary scheme submitted to him by the traders; the ease with which the patriot General Aurey had got him entangled in one of his expeditions against the Spaniards at Truxillo; and his general inattention to the safety, and prosperity, of his subjects. He also regretted that there was no British superintendants on the coast, as formerly, in the time of Colonel Hodgson, when the Mosquito Indians could find employment, and a demand for their produce, at Black River, and the other settlements; and

the chiefs, throughout the coast, could dress themselves, and live, "right English gentleman fashion." The chiefs, and old men, agreed with him in these observations; and, they also, universally disproved of the arbitrary manner in which the Jamaica traders exerted the influence they had acquired at some of the settlements of the coast, * adding, that rather than deal with them, they had actually, this season, sold the greater part of their tortoise-shell to the Americans, who, although they had such a variety of goods, were fairer dealers, and gave a better price.

Early in the morning, I was awakened by the noise of the drum; the natives were in a state of bustle and activity, preparing for the drinking match, and the reception of the King. He arrived, in a large canoe, with ten people, escorted by the same number in two smaller ones. At the landing-place he was met by Admiral Earnee and General Blyatt, with some of the chief men of the neighbouring settlements; the two former dressed in uniforms, with gold epaulettes. There was little form or ceremony used in their reception of the King; a shake of the hand, and "how do you do, King," in English, being the only salutation from all classes. Briefly inquiring my motives for coming to see him, he invited me to go with him to the Cape, and I could then, at leisure, judge how far he could second my views, and how he was situated with his people, amongst whom,

* They have been known to flog an Indian because he could not, at the stipulated time, pay a small debt; and they often take advantage of the natives, by making them intoxicated; and, in that state, get them to part with the produce of their labours, without an equivalent.

four years ago, on his return from Jamaica, where he was educated, he found himself quite a stranger.

He was a young man, about twenty-four years of age, of a bright copper colour, with long curly hair hanging in ringlets down the sides of his face; his hands and feet small, a dark expressive eye, and very white teeth. He was an active and handsome figure, with the appearance of greater agility than strength. In other respects I found him, on further acquaintance, wild as the deer on his native savannahs.

During the day, Indians arrived from various parts of the coast, and interior. At the meeting which took place in the King's house, various matters relative to the government of the neighbouring settlements, disputes, and other public business, was discussed; and I observed, that the King left every thing to the discretion of Earnee, Blyatt, and a few others. In fact, he seemed to take little interest or trouble, further than to sanction the resolutions passed, so that they might be promulgated as "the King's own order." Such is the expression; and that order is invariably obeyed, and carried into effect. During the time the council was sitting, no women were admitted; a few only were afterwards permitted to enter, during the drinking match, to take care of their husbands, when reduced to a state of insensibility by intoxication.

The discussions in the King's house being ended, the feasting began. Two men were stationed by the side of the canoe, who filled the mish-law drink into calabashes, which were then carried to the company by boys. As the men be-

came exhilarated, they began to dance, in imitation of country dances, and Scotch reels, learned from the former English settlers; but they soon became too much intoxicated to preserve order. Every one, including the King and his select friends at the Admiral's house, gave way, without restraint, to the pleasures of drinking; and, during the evening, the King's uncle Andrew, chief man at Duckwarra, arrived, bringing one of his majesty's favourite wives. This chief was a short stout man, of unmixed Indian blood, very lively and quick in his motions, disguising, under an appearance of levity, much cunning and shrewdness;—he spoke tolerably good English; and soon, by his ridiculous stories regarding the Jamaica traders, and by his satirical and witty remarks upon some of the old Mosquito men present, kept the company in a roar of laughter. The King observed to me, in course of the evening, that I must not be surprised to see him act in the manner he was doing; as it was his wish, by indulging the natives, to induce them to adopt gradually, and by degrees, the English customs, and mode of living; and he requested me to observe how far he had succeeded, pointing out to me, that all present had thrown aside the *pulpera*, the common Indian dress, and wore jackets and trowsers, with good hats. Some of them had coats, with other articles to correspond; and, as I have often repeated, they prided themselves upon being "true English gentleman fashion."

His majesty, as usual, paid more attention to the women than to the chiefs; and, observing to me that the ladies here could dance fully as well as any of those at the former English settlements,

proposed that I should join him, the Admiral, and uncle Andrew, in a dance; and he would send for the women to join us. I of course readily assented to this proposal; and the females having arrived, we commenced dancing, to the sound of a drum, our only music.

Blyatt had orders to keep the party in the King's house from interrupting us, but our music being full as noisy as theirs, and the secret of the women's arrival having transpired, our house was soon surrounded by a crowd, who pressed so much, that it became insufferably warm; and we were obliged to stop the dance; at which circumstance, many of the Indians expressed such disappointment, that the King good-naturedly proposed to renew the dance in the open air. The other party joining us, with their music, we were soon all jumbled together, King, Admiral, General, Mosquito men and women, in one mass of confusion and revelry, from which those who were capable of reflecting were soon glad to escape. Before the chiefs became totally intoxicated, they ordered the women home to their houses, to prevent their being unable to take care of their husbands. The drinking was carried on with great perseverance, during the night, by old and young. The drums were beat, and muskets fired, some of them loaded with powder to the very muzzle, until nearly all the assembly were in a state of beastly drunkenness, and taken care of by the women, who were occasionally called upon for that purpose. At intervals, however, as the men recovered, they found their way back to their favourite mishlaw, and renewed the debauch. All the next day was consumed in drinking; and, it was not until

the day following, that the liquors were reduced to the very dregs of the cassava and maize, which, even then, was taken from the bottom of the vessels, and being squeezed through the fingers, by handfuls, into the calabashes, was passed to those who were still craving for more of the precious beverage. By the third night, the whole liquors were consumed; and the Indians began to retire to their respective homes, many complaining, with great reason, that "their heads were all spoiled." It is however to their credit, that, during the whole of this debauch, I did not perceive the slightest quarrel.

I may here observe, that the English drum is the principal musical instrument of the Mosquito men, who beat it with as much dexterity, as the most practised European drummer; it came into use when the British forces were on the Mosquito Shore, and has been a great favourite ever since, every settlement having one. The only other musical instrument, which I saw, was a rude pipe or flute, rather longer than a common flute, but much thicker. It is made of the hollow bamboo,—one end is shaped like a flageolet, with hole and mouthpiece, and it has four finger-holes, the first about two thirds down the length of the instrument, the others at intervals of about half an inch; it requires considerable exertion to sound it, and produces a dull monotonous tone, with very little variation. Two of these instruments are sounded together; the performers dancing a sort of minuet, in which they advance and recede, with the most grotesque gesticulations. One of their favourite dances is a kind of representation, characteristic of an Indian courtship.

Governor Clementi, one of the three principal chiefs of the Mosquito Shore, not having made his appearance at this feast, it was determined to send a person to endeavour to conciliate him. The causes of this chief's aversion to join cordially with the other chiefs, are as follows:—his late brother, commonly called Don Carlos, had been, some time before, put to death by the King's people, on pretence that he was too much attached to the Spaniards of Grenada and Nicaragua, with whom he had opened an intercourse, and had received from them considerable presents, of cattle, &c. This man was supposed, by the King's party, to have had the design of assisting the Spaniards, in forming a settlement on the Mosquito coast; but, it is more probable that, his Spanish connexion, was one of the pretences—not the entire cause of his being destroyed. He was an Indian of pure blood, and considerable ability—the only man of that description, with exception of his brother Clementi, who held any situation of consequence, under the Mosquito King's government; he possessed great influence among the Indians, including the different tribes of Woolwas and Cookras. His own immediate government extending from Sandy Bay to Pearl Kay Lagoon, was likely, in time, to become too powerful for the Mosquito-men, and they, in a treacherous, and summary manner, put him to death. Since that event, his brother Clementi never visited the King, nor any of the settlements of the real Mosquito-men. This breach, between the King and Clementi, had been widened by the insolence of a favourite negro belonging to the former, who had, some time ago, accompanied

Robert, the present King's brother, on a visit to Clementi, who received and treated them with great hospitality; but this negro, at a feast made in honour of Robert, not only grossly insulted the Governor, but, presuming on his own influence with the King, and the supposed imbecility of Clementi, forcibly broke up some of the latter's repositories, and insisted upon carrying off certain articles, which had attracted his cupidity. Robert declining to interfere, Clementi seized a musket, and shot the negro dead, upon the spot. The King, not daring openly to attack the governor, endeavoured to revenge himself by seizing and driving away the cattle, whenever he had occasion for them:—but to prevent this annoyance, Clementi, voluntarily, destroyed or drove them away out of the King's reach; and now, instead of the numerous herds that, during the time of Don Pedro, abounded in the savannahs, not one is to be seen. It was now supposed that Clementi meditated revenge; and, to prevent a civil war, between the Indians and Mosquito men, the King, previous to his return to the Cape, was desirous of conciliating Clementi. The King had other reasons for coming to friendly terms with him: he was aware that he had once grossly insulted Earnee, his best friend, and the only chief, since the death of "General" Robinson, capable of governing the country,—by forcibly using freedoms, during Earnee's absence, with one of his favourite wives; and, that, in consequence, Earnee had some time ago formed an alliance with Clementi, by marrying Clementi's youngest sister, and might, in the event of a quarrel, join the Governor. Earnee excused himself from undertaking this expedition; and I

was therefore requested by the King, to accompany Blyatt, with about twenty people, to Clementi, with a King's letter, in which it was stated, that not being able to come himself, he had empowered the Admiral to assist him in punishing any of his people who were refractory, or refused to obey his authority; but that the Admiral being unable to come, had sent Blyatt. I was directed to read this letter to Clementi, in presence of Blyatt, who was to explain that "*the paper which spoke*, was the King's own self order, and must be obeyed."

We accordingly set out, and, travelling about eight miles to the upper part of Wava Lagoon, embarked in three canoes, which brought us to a river where we landed; and, crossing an extensive savannah, came to a branch of the Wava River, where we found canoes to convey us to the savannah where the Governor resided. Crossing the river we slept on its banks, until midnight, when we renewed our journey.

The Indians, on their long journeys, generally travel until ten o'clock in the morning, they then rest until two or three o'clock in the afternoon; then they continue their journey, until day-light fails them. At the different halting places, they sleep upon a few palm leaves on the ground, slightly covered with a light blanket, and I generally rose refreshed, and never experienced any bad effects, from this method of bivouacking: before going to rest, a fire is kindled, and the necessary provisions cooked. In travelling, they only wear the pulpera, but they carry with them, and put on, a suit of their best clothes, at a short dis-

tance from the house of the person they mean to visit.

About ten o'clock, we came to a savannah, through which there was a good path to the Governor's house, about a mile distant; and, Earnes, having privately sent to apprise Clementi of the intended visit, recommending that he should invite his friends to a mishlaw drink, and be prepared to meet the King's party, we found some of his people at this place waiting to conduct us. Our party having dressed themselves, Blyatt, myself, and one or two others, mounted horses which had been sent for our accommodation; we fell into Indian marching order, one before another, and, with our flag and drum preceding us, we approached the house, before which, about twenty men besides women and children were assembled. The house is situated on a rising ground, commanding an extensive view of the savannah, on which there were several fine horses feeding, but I could not discover any black cattle, although there was evidently pasturage for thousands.

The Governor did not come out to receive us; he was sitting in the house, dressed in state, and rose to welcome Blyatt and myself, but took no notice of those who accompanied us. The appearance, and demeanour of this old chief, struck me very forcibly; and impressed upon my mind that I had, before me, a true descendant and representative of the ancient Indian Caziques. He was a tall stout man, apparently between fifty and sixty years of age, with an Indian countenance, peculiarly expressive of thoughtful dignity; I could not help thinking, that he looked as if he felt degraded by the yoke of the Mosquito-men,—that he

had been born to command, and still felt conscious, like "old Crozimbo," that he was "*not* the least among his countrymen." He was dressed in an old Spanish uniform, of blue cloth with red collar and facings, decorated with a great profusion of tarnished gold lace; an old embroidered white satin vest, ornamented with spangles, and having large pocket holes with flaps; a pair of old white kerseymere breeches; white cotton stockings; shoes, with silver buckles; and, a large gold headed cane, similar to those used by the superior Corregidores and Alcaldes of the South American provinces,—completed his dress.

These clothes, which were of the most ancient cut, had descended to him from his unfortunate brother; and altogether, the dignified appearance, and manners, of this old chief, contrasted strongly with the coarse brutality of the Mosquito-men, and impressed upon my mind, that the domination of the Sambocs, had materially retarded the prosperity of the genuine Indians. Clementi ordered refreshments, and provided plentifully, in a separate house, for those who came in our company, allowing none but the principal men to sit at his own table.

After dinner I read the King's letter, at the contents of which, the Governor expressed satisfaction; a tall young pine-tree was cut, the English flag hoisted upon it in front of the house, and the Governor seemed to feel he was now treated with proper respect and reinstated in his rights and privileges: he pointed out two or three Indians who he conceived had disputed his authority, or injured him; they were immediately secured by Blyatt's people, and tied up; but in-

stead of being flogged, in the usual way, the stripes were laid on a dried bull's hide, instead of the backs of the offenders. Whether this mummery really satisfied the Governor, or he felt it convenient to dissemble, I could not determine at the moment; but I afterwards learnt, that to have undergone this nominal punishment, was considered by the free Indians, a very serious degradation. The evening passed over without any cause of disagreement; I repeatedly read over the King's letter "which spoke," and the Governor seemed pleased to find himself freed from the probability of further annoyance from the King's people. He showed me several letters, and certificates given to him, and his late brother, by traders, and others; all of them testifying to their honour and fair dealing.

The land, in this part of the country, is low savannah, covered partially with patches of large pine-trees. The principal provision ground of the Governor's people is distant, at a place called the Hills, from which circumstance they are known, all over the coast, by the name of *hill people*. These hills, or elevations, three in number, are to the westward of Brancmans, at a considerable distance inland; being but of moderate height, they cannot be distinguished, in approaching from the sea; the land there, and to the westward, is extremely rich, and well cultivated, supplying the people at Sandy Bay, Cape Gracias a Dios, and other places on the coast, with the greater part of their provisions, such as bananas, plantains, &c. Being too distant from the coast to combine the advantages of agriculture, with those of fishing and trading, no strangers have yet settled on this high ground.

In crossing the pine ridges, a small distance to the westward of Brancman's Bluff, in the path that leads to the Para Lagoon, I discovered some pits of fine marl; and also, an exceedingly fine white clay, equal to the best pipe-clay I ever saw; if the Indians understood any thing of the manufacture of earthen ware, they have here an inexhaustible supply of materials, of the very finest discription. *

Clementi claims the whole of the land, extensive savannah, and fine ridges, from hence to the coast; including the hills, and interior country;—he possesses the confidence of a numerous race of pure Indians, and I cannot doubt that, in the event of any attempt, on the part of these aborigines, to throw off the yoke of the mixed breed of Mosquito-men, he, or his successors, may be destined to act a prominent part; and, on this account, I have been desirous of describing the little I saw of him, in as circumstantial a manner as possible.

Blyat having finished his business with the Governor, after staying with him three days we left his settlement, and returned through the same low tracts which we had recently travelled over. A great part of this coast is during the rainy season overflowed, and it is possible for a canoe to pass, at that season, by inland navigation, from Para Lagoon, to Wava River; this is the case, generally speaking, with all the *low* savannah land, from Pearl Kay Lagoon to the Cape, and from thence, to Plantain River. At Duckwarra, we were hospitably entertained by the King's uncle Andrew: this jovial old man pressed us to remain some days with him and his friends, Rowla and

* See Note IV.

Tarra, two of the chiefs; but we next morning proceeded on our journey. I was particularly well pleased with the appearance of the people at Andrew's settlement; they are a fine looking race —the men are active, and good strikers of fish, and the women and girls very handsome.

On our arrival at Sandy Bay we found Earnee very unwell;—he procured men and a canoe to attend me to the Cape, to which place I next proceeded, by the inner passage, there being a communication between Sandy Bay and Wano Sound, —which is a place with only four or five feet water on the bar, and equally shallow inside.

In the evening we landed at a settlement of Mosquito men, at the upper end of the Sound, and were received with that hospitality which I have universally found prevalent on every part of the coast. We resumed our journey early next morning, and proceeded down the Sound to its entrance, where we landed, and walked to the Cape, a distance of about eight miles.

CHAPTER VII.

CAPE GRACIAS A DIOS—OLD KING GEORGE, THE PRESENT KING—EDUCATION AT JAMAICA. BAD SOIL — HARBOUR — GREAT CAPE RIVER. IMPORTANCE OF THE CAPE — ORIGIN OF THE SAMBOES—CROATCH RIVER — KUKARI — SPOTTED INDIANS — CARATASCA LAGOON — FISH AND GAME—SOIL, PRODUCE—CRATER—PATOOK RIVER—HORSES—KHARIBEES — BREWERS LAGOON—BLACK RIVER AND LAGOON—OLD FORT. SETTLERS — MINES — FERTILITY OF THE SETTLEMENTS—STORY OF IAN AUSTIN.

On my arrival at Cape Gracias a Dios, I was much disappointed to find only a few houses; and those, with the exception of the King's, that of Dalby, one of his chiefs, and an old merchant's of the name of Bogg, of the very worst description, being mere huts, barely sufficient to protect the natives from the weather.

I remained several months with the King; and had every opportunity of knowing him, and his people, intimately. The circumstances which led to his being sent, in his youth, to Jamaica, where he received a very indifferent education, are brief-

ly these. His father, old King George, was of the mixed, or Negro and Indian breed; he was of a cruel, barbarous, and vindictive disposition; he had been the means of enslaving many Indians of the Blanco, Woolwa, and Cookra tribes; and, like all the other Mosquito chiefs, had a great number of wives and women, whom he often treated with such cruelty, that some of them died under his hands. The murder of one of these women, under circumstances of peculiar barbarity, called forth the resentment of her friends, who created a riot, during which the King was fired upon, and killed, by his own people. He left two sons, George Frederick the present King, and his half-brother Robert, then both very young. A trader, from the Bay of Honduras, conceiving that he might derive great advantages from the possession of these children, contrived to get them into his vessel, and persuaded the chiefs that they might derive great benefits by having their future king educated "English fashion," so that he might understand something of the laws, manners and customs, of their friends the English. The children were allowed to depart; and the chiefs forming a kind of regency, the three principal ones agreed to retain the country for the eldest son, dividing it, in the mean time, into three governments; the first, from Roman River, near Cape Honduras, to Patook, including the tribes of Kharibees or Caribs, Poyers, Mosquito men, and some negroes formerly attached to the British settlements, was confided to *General* Robinson.

The second division, from Caratasca or Croata, to Sandy Bay, and Duckwarra, which included

all the Mosquito men proper, or mixed breed of Samboes and Indians, was left under the rule, of a chief, the brother of the late King, under the name of *Admiral*.

The third division, from Brancmans, to Great River (Rio Grande) was under the charge of Don Carlos, denominated *the Governor;* and included the tribes of Tongulas, Towcas, Woolwas, Cookras, &c. These three chiefs each appointed headmen, within their respective districts, subordinate to their authority. The small colonies of Samboes, at Pearl Kay Lagoon and Bluefields, were, however, allowed to choose their own governors.

The children were, after some time, sent from Honduras to Jamaica; and his Grace the Duke of Manchester is said to have shown some attention to the eldest, who always spoke of the Duke with sentiments of respect and gratitude. After going through the routine of an indifferent education, he was sent to Balize; at which place, the principal Mosquito chiefs were invited to meet him, and the ceremony of his coronation was performed with considerable pomp; the young chief being escorted to the church by the British superintendant, the regular troops, militia, and principal people of the settlement. The Reverend Mr Armstrong put the crown (a present from the British to one of his ancestors) on his head; and he was formally invested with the sword, rake, and spurs; a royal salute was fired, and he was styled *King of the Mosquito Shore and Nation.*

Medals, and dresses, were presented to the chiefs; and the whole were sent down to the coast in a British sloop of war. They were acci-

dentally landed at General Robinson's residence, between Black River and Brewers Lagoon; and the King unhappily commenced his reign by grossly insulting and quarrelling with the General, his most powerful chief. At Cape Gracias a Dios, the King was received in the most friendly manner by all the members of his family, who principally reside at an extensive pine savannah called the Ridge, about forty miles from the Cape, at a short distance from the bank of the great Cape River.

He frequently assured me, that, on his arrival at Cape Gracias a Dios, and for many months afterwards, he regretted having returned to his country, or that he had ever left it; for he found himself a perfect stranger, ignorant of the interests of his subjects, and unacquainted with the influence, or abilities, of the chiefs who, in other circumstances, might have assisted him in forming something like a government; while, at the same time, he was expected by his friends the British, to fulfil duties, which he honestly confessed he was but in a very slight manner qualified to perform. He seemed perfectly sensible of these deficiences, but without having energy, or application, to remedy them; or to assume, and maintain, with propriety, the rank and station in which Providence had placed him. These considerations, at times, embittered his life; his good resolutions, and endeavours at amendment, constantly vanished, when they were put in competition with the pleasures of the bottle, and his other vicious propensities, which were encouraged by the manners and customs of his subjects, whom he considered it

necessary to conciliate, until they at length became habitual to him; and, when any vessel visited the coast, or whenever he could procure rum, he was generally in a state of intoxication. At such times, his naturally liberal disposition overcame his prudence; and, his countrymen found it their interest to encourage this vice, and hailed the arrival of the traders, as the signal for indulging in their propensities for drinking, which they were always sure the King would, not only gratify to the extent of his abilities, but that, in those misguarded moments, he would readily present them with any thing of value in his possession. Under all these circumstances it is not surprising that George Frederick failed to realize the hopes of those who expected better of him. After his first arrival presents of clothing, blankets, cloth, duck, moscheats and other articles, were sent to him, by the British Government, for the purpose of being distributed among his people with a view to conciliate them, and maintain his authority; and, at such times, the Reverend Mr Armstrong never failed to send him letters of advice regarding the regulation of his conduct, and the duties he owed to his people; with a number of religious tracts, which were generally neglected, the King and his Prime Minister observing, that a present of rum would have been far more acceptable, as he found it impossible to instruct his people on points which he did not himself understand, and which they insisted were 'Englishman lies.' He was naturally of a generous disposition, and not destitute of ability; and, it is perhaps to be regretted that he did not receive an European, rather than an extremely loose

West Indian education: by the former he would have had a fair chance of acquiring correct habits, and some idea of the importance of order and good government; whereas, by the latter, he became possessed of very little really useful information, and had an opportunity of engrafting, as it were, the bad qualities of the European, and Creole, upon the vicious propensities of the Samboe, and the capricious disposition of the Indian, by which his life was embittered, and his ultimate destruction caused. * Columbus and the companions of his fourth voyage were the first Europeans who visited the Cape.

The soil in the neighbourhood is extremely bad; and, with the exception of a few spots on which there are small patches of cassava, is incapable of producing any thing better than a coarse rank grass, fit however for pasturage. The inhabitants of the Cape, and the King himself, as I have formerly stated, are consequently obliged to depend on the people of the Hill Country, Croatch River, and those settled a considerable way up the Great Cape River, for plantains, maize, and other provisions.

Owing to these causes, combined with an entire want of game, and a scarcity of good water, the Cape presents no advantages for an agricultural settlement. But, for a commercial establishment,

* He was, it is said, assassinated in 1824, but I have not been able to learn the immediate circumstances which led to that catastrophe. Colonel Geo. Woodbine of San Andres, at the request of the chiefs, sat as chairman in the investigation which took place, and I have heard that some of those concerned in the murder were put to death. Robert succeeded to him—and has, in his, turn given way to James, descended from a more ancient branch of the family.

and for grazing, it holds out many inducements ;—it has an excellent harbour or small bay, perfectly secure from all winds, although in some parts open to the south, which seldom blows: the bay is capable of containing a large fleet in three to five fathoms water, with good holding ground, abounding in fish of various kinds; and, frequented, at certain seasons, by innumerable flocks of teal and widgeon. It is at no great distance from the Mosquito Kays, whence can be procured, at all seasons, inexhaustible supplies of the finest green turtle; and, but for this last circumstance, the Cape would be, perhaps, entirely deserted, such vessels as call there, being induced to do so only by the abundant supplies of turtle and tortoise-shell, and for the purpose of communicating with the King.

The Great Cape or Vankes River, is known to have its source in the same mountainous country, which near to the Pacific gives rise to the Bluefields River, or Rio de Nueva Segovia: its upper part is described by the Buccaniers, who, about 120½ years ago, forced their way from the Gulf of Fonseca, across the mountains, to the Spanish town of Nueva Segovia, and from thence, after passing a short distance to the river, descended it in floats or pippirees to the Atlantic—as being situated amongst rocky and precipitous mountains, with numerous falls; that its course is over a channel of prodigious rocks; and that it runs with great rapidity until within about sixty leagues of the sea. The length of its course is said to be two to three hundred miles; and it passes through some of the richest land, and most romantic scenery in Central America. Within forty or fifty miles of its mouth the land becomes low, poor, and sandy, with oc-

casional ridges of pitch-pine, and some patches of good mould; but, although the savannahs are fit for pasturage, and would support numerous herds, cattle are exceedingly scarce.

Cape River enters the ocean some distance to the northward of the bay, or harbour, and there is a shallow, canal-like communication, from the uppermost part of the latter, into the river, passable by canoes; and which, might easily be enlarged, so as to enable small vessels to avoid the dangerous bar of the river itself, on which there is seldom more than four or five feet water. If commercial establishments were formed at the Cape, vessels might lie in safety at the upper end of the harbour all the year round; and if sufficient encouragement were given, the valuable products of the interior would be collected, brought down the river, and, by the communication alluded to, into the bay, and shipped at all seasons of the year.

It will be perceived, by what I have stated, that the country governed by Clementi, and part of that under Robinson, is almost exclusively possessed by different tribes of unmixed Indians, who are in possession of the richest land, and whose manners, and customs, and language, are, for the most part, essentially different from those of the Mosquito men, who are greatly dependent upon them for game and other provisions.

These Indians are in general of a mild and peaceable disposition; in which respect, they essentially differ from their Moequito rulers, who seem to have derived, from their negro ancestor, a certain degree of enterprise, which constantly incites them to restless activity, rather than to the enjoyment of the quiet and peaceable habits of

the genuine Indian:—hence they are rather fishers, than cultivators of the soil; and, although they have, after many struggles, attained the ascendancy, they are by no means so estimable in a moral point of view, being treacherous, superstitious, and much more inclined to every species of debauchery, than the real Indian, who, in general, adheres strictly to the truth; while, with very few exceptions, the Samboe will not hesitate to violate every honest principle to accomplish the particular object which he may have in view. They are, however, hospitable, and have hitherto, on every emergency, cordially agreed with their neighbours in hatred to the Spaniards, and joined in defence of their liberties, whenever they considered themselves in danger. Their negro ancestors are said, by Mr Edwards * and others, to have been Africans from the Samba country, some hundreds of whom were wrecked on this coast in a Dutch vessel, and that having, by this means, recovered their liberty, they travelled northwards, toward Cape Gracias a Dios; and, after several *rencontres* with the natives, came to a friendly understanding with them, —had wives and ground allotted; and have at length, by intermarriages, become in some measure an Indian people, who, were they under prudent and active chiefs, are, by their nature and disposition, well calculated to maintain their ascendancy. But, it is not improbable that their vicious propensities, encouraged by the imprudent conduct, and imbecility of their head men, may shortly rouse the vengeance of the genuine In-

* History of the West Indies, *5th Edition, Appendix.* As they become more mixed with the natives, their appearance and character is every day less distinctly marked.

dians, who are by far the most numerous, and have only been kept in a kind of nominal subjection by their love of peace, fear of their common enemy the Spaniard; and, by the divisions which the Mosquito-men have artfully created, and take care to keep up amongst them. There is yet a third class, whose vengeance may be equally fatal to them—namely, the Kharibees; * who are darker in complexion, and superior in industry, to both the former classes; and, if they continue to increase with the same rapidity as at present, may, ultimately, obtain the entire ascendancy, at least on the country north of the Cape.

During my sojourn with the King, I accompanied him in several excursions along the coast, and into the interior; in particular, to Black River in the Poyais country, since ceded to General MacGregor. During that journey, I had an opportunity of seeing the principal settlements along the coast to the northward of Cape Gracias a Dios; and, in order to preserve the form of narrative which I have adopted, shall confine my present observations, to that journey, reserving an account of the Kharibees north of Black River, until after my return from Nicaragua and the City of Leon, when I finally visited them.

Some Englishmen, and an American, acquainted with the value of the land about Black River, and with the former state of the plantations there, had arrived from Barbadoes, with the determination of forming a settlement at that place, and the King was now desirous of visiting, and giving them

* I write the word not according to the European mode, but as it is universally pronounced on the coast.

encouragement. We left the Cape in a large boat, with about a dozen people. In running along the coast we passed False Cape, situated about twenty-five miles distant from Great Cape River. We afterwards passed the River Croatch, a short distance from False Cape: it is of considerable size, with from nine to ten feet water over the bar—the land, on its banks, is fertile, although not much elevated, producing great quantities of plantains, and other provisions, with which its inhabitants, who are Samboes, principally supply those at the Cape.

We next visited Kukari, situated in a fertile savannah, having opposite to it a haulover from Caratasca Lagoon to the sea; and, at this haulover we landed, and proceeded to the house of its headman, known by the name of the carpenter, a person possessed of a strong natural genius, and the only native mechanic on the coast; he is expert at repairing old muskets, making new stocks for them, mending gun-locks, and such other matters as require some display of ingenuity. This man has, from his infancy, been subject to a very singular disease hereditary in his family, called by the natives *bulpis*, supposed to be of a scrofulous nature, or similar to that which causes the extraordinary appearance of the Albinos: he was completely spotted brown and white, all over the body; without, however, any particular roughness of the skin. It did not, however, so far as I could learn, affect the eyesight, or injure his general health.

From Kukari, we proceeded across the haulover, into a small stream, leading to Caratasca Lagoon. The entrance to this Lagoon (the *Bahia*

de Cartago of the Spaniards), in sailing down the coast, may be easily found; for, although the land on each side is remarkably low, the entrance to it is wide, and there are few conspicuous cocoa-nut trees, at Croata, near to it; being the only trees of that description on the shore to the eastward of Patook River. It is of very considerable extent, varying in breadth; and having, in some places, the appearance of several lagoons running into each other, in various directions, for the most part, parallel to the coast, but no where exceeding twelve miles in breadth. One of these extends to within a very short distance of the River Patook, and communicates with it by a small inlet. It abounds in various sorts of fish of the finest description, particularly mullet, calapaner, snook, cavallee, and also manatee; and, it is the constant resort of immense quantities of ducks, widgeon, teal, and various aquatic birds. The Samboes have several settlements on its western borders; and parties of quiet and peaceable unmixed Indians, reside in the interior, or, on the banks of the rivers which empty themselves into it. The land in the vicinity consists almost entirely of extensive and beautiful savannahs, covered with the finest pasturage, and abounding in deer and other game. Black cattle were formerly numerous, but the Mosquito men have not been provident enough to keep up the breed, selling all they could lay hold of, to the traders who frequently visit the Lagoon, for the purpose of carrying them off. There are few pine trees at Croata, but on the opposite, or land side, there are ridges containing timber as large as any on the coast: behind these ridges, to the westward, the savannahs are bounded by gently

rising hills, whose summits are covered by the most luxuriant vegetation; and on the banks of the streams in the interior, there is excellent mahogany, and cedar of the finest quality and largest size. Pimento and various other valuable plants are also indigenous. Crota or Crata, the principal settlement, is on the sea-coast, at about three miles distant from the entrance to the Lagoon. We were received by Morton and his son Washington, with the greatest cordiality; the former had recently succeeded to the authority and title of the late Captain Potts, well known at the Bay of Honduras as the chief of this settlement. Here we remained two days, and were hospitably entertained, the King and his people being, from the following circumstance, kept in a constant state of excitement. A pipe of white wine had been discovered on the beach, and rolled to Morton's residence; he and his neighbours opened the cask, and continued drinking for several days, unremittingly, until it was finished. The men were, however, surprised to find that the women continued to be tipsy; they had also found a cask and concealed it in the bushes, for their own private use. This was soon discovered, and Morton, in rebuking them, said, that 'for woman to get drunk was not English lady fashion.' This cask was also brought to the settlement, and the men recommenced drinking until all were completely satiated. The remainder, about half a pipe, was presented to us; and our party, after drinking as much as they could, carried off part of it as a sea stock.

Continuing our voyage, we kept inside the La-

goon until we arrived at Tabacounta, a small stream * running from a branch of the Lagoon into the ocean, about five miles from Patook. This stream has only three or four feet water at its entrance; and, in the best weather, it can only be entered by small canoes. We arrived at Patook River the same evening; a strong current was setting out of it; the bar, on which there is generally eight or ten feet of water, shifts in the rainy season, or during heavy gales, and occasionally leaves a sufficient depth for vessels of considerable burden. The tides, which seldom or never rise exceeding a few feet, ebb and flow into it for some miles; it is of considerable magnitude, being augmented by several tributary streams, the chief of which is the *Rio Barba* of the Spaniards; it has an inferior mouth, beside that already mentioned, falling into the Brewers Lagoon; it rises in a ridge of mountains, which separate it from the Great Cape River, and its course is estimated to be upwards of one hundred and fifty miles. Some dangerous shoals lay off the principal entrance; and from Patook Point, which is on the eastern side, a bank extends nearly two miles, on which there is very little water. The land in the interior is very fertile, and provisions are plentiful at this settlement, which is composed principally of negroes formerly belonging to Mr Hewlet, a merchant some time ago settled at Black River. These negroes and their descendants have established themselves here in the same manner as those at Bluefields, and Pearl Kay Lagoon. They have some black cattle, horses, pigs, poultry, &c.; part of these they are

* In some charts laid down as Little Patook River.

always ready to sell at a very low price. They also, among other things, cultivate tobacco and rice, which grow uncommonly well, and are chiefly bartered with their neighbours the Kharibees, who sell them at the Bay of Honduras.

Only three families of Mosquito-men reside at this settlement, which is on the right bank of the river, about half a mile from the sea. The headman of the place is Jack, an old negro, who was a great favourite of the late Mosquito King, and intrusted by the present George Frederick with the keeping of the Crown and other regalia, which he carefully conceals; the late King had secreted a considerable sum of money in a place known only to this man, through whose honesty it was made known and recovered by the present King. Jack informed me, that he had frequently ascended the river as far as the back settlements of the Spaniards, with whom he occasionally bartered a few trifling articles brought to him by the Kharibees; that at one part of its course it has forced its way through a ridge of small hills, one of which was excavated by the stream, and completely arched, so that his dorie passed underneath, as if through a cavern, for a distance of nearly five hundred yards. It is frequented by the largest alligators I have ever seen, but they seldom do mischief. Its banks are extremely fertile, and produce the banana and plantain in great perfection—a sure criterion of the excellence of the soil. Two of the Kharibees came to visit the King, and during our stay provided us with Charib bread, the method of preparing which I shall, hereafter, have occasion to describe.

The appearance of the atmosphere indicating a

storm, the King determined to proceed by land, leaving the greater part of the people behind to wait his return.

The natives of this settlement possess a considerable number of horses, the breed of which had been obtained from Caratasca; but, being little used, and there being no sale, they have multiplied so greatly, that in the neighbouring savannahs hundreds are to be found, in a state of nature; although, so far as I could judge, they are docile, and could be easily broke, and trained to the saddle, or other purposes. Two of them being furnished to us, we on the third day from our arrival set off for Brewers Lagoon. Our route lay along the beach; and, occasionally, through the savannahs, which are parallel to it. About four miles below the settlement of Patook, is the first village of the Kharibees, who have spread themselves from Truxillo along the shore as far as this place, and are great favourites with the present King. We stopped occasionally to converse with the old men, who always cordially welcomed the King, and appeared anxious to entertain us with the best fare they had. The men wore shirts and trowsers; the women were almost completely naked, having merely two small square pieces of red calico not larger than a common pocket handkerchief:—one of these was suspended before, the other behind, and secured to the shape with small strings of silk grass; their manners, were, however, modest and diffident; and the girls, whenever they observed us, ran to conceal themselves, where they thought they could look at us, without being seen.

We remained in the evening at the last Khari-

bee house in this quarter, close to a haul-over into Brewers Lagoon. Here we left our horses, and embarked in a canoe, in which we reached the entrance of the Lagoon, about ten miles distant; the entrance is tolerably wide, but will not admit vessels of more than nine feet water. Three or four miles from the entrance is a small island, of moderate height, about two miles in circumference, fertile, and formerly fortified by the English, who used to raise live stock and provisions upon it. It is now overrun with trees, mangrove, and mohoe bushes; and some of the guns left by the British still remain, where they were originally placed:—it could again be fortified at very little expense, and would form an excellent station either for commerce, or for European settlers and plantations. The Lagoon abounds in banks of very fine oysters, with fish and fowl in abundance. The country to the westward is beautifully diversified by gently rising hills, valleys, and savannahs; and the soil, generally speaking, is excellent.

About two miles from the mouth of the Lagoon is Plantain River; a small stream, with a dangerous bar, passable only by canoes. On the banks of this river is the residence of "General" Robinson, one of the three chiefs already mentioned. The General being absent at the Bay of Honduras disposing of sarsaparilla, and other commodities, procured, principally, from the Poyer Indians, part of whom are settled on the upper part of this river. We did not wait for his return, but crossed Plantain River, and pursued our way, along the beach, for about half a mile;—we then entered a savannah, from the ridge of which we had a beautiful prospect of the surrounding country, and of the

Sugar-loaf Mountain, Richmond Hill, and other high grounds in the vicinity of Black River. Reaching Black River Lagoon, which is about fourteen or sixteen miles long, and about half as broad, we proceeded in canoes towards its entrance. It contains several small islands, some of which were occupied for raising provisions, and cattle, when the British held possession of Black River; on its borders are extensive savannahs, and pine ridges, from whence the former settlers used to draw considerable quantities of tar, pitch, and turpentine: The ruins of the old works are still visible; and, from their present appearance, must have been very extensive. We observed immense quantities of pigeons, teal, muscovy ducks, and other birds, which, in the morning, kept flying about in flocks of many hundreds;—at the extremity of the Lagoon, we entered a natural canal of moderate width, about three miles in length, and the water of considerable depth, connecting the Lagoon with Black River.

Having crossed the course of the main stream of the river, we passed the point on which the British had formerly a small fort, created for the protection of the settlement; the situation appeared very proper for the purpose. The fort had been surrounded by a ditch, and could still, at a trifling expense, be made tenable. We found the new settlement on the banks of a branch of the river, about three miles from its entrance. The situation seemed to be low and ill chosen, a few houses had been put up, on the site of part of the former town, by the new settlers,—who were at this time Colonel Gordon of the independent service, Captain Murray and his wife, Captain Hosmore and his son,

with three or four other white people. Colonel Gordon and his party had been settled some time previous to the arrival of the others; they had cleared a considerable quantity of land, and had already raised one crop, of about five hundred bushels of Indian corn, with which Gordon had gone to Truxillo; having formed a contract with the commandant of that place to take all that he could raise. The quality appeared equal, if not superior, to any raised in the Southern States of the Union. Mr Warren, an American, had been left in charge of the Colonel's plantation; good crops, and a ready demand for their produce, seemed to be anticipated by all parties. Young Hosmore, and another Englishman, had been up the river, on a visit to the Poyer Indians, whose first regular settlements are about forty miles from its entrance, and are extended, as high as the Spanish Embarcadero, about fifty miles farther up. When there, they, by way of ascertaining how far the extensive trade formerly carried on could be revived, despatched an Indian to the Spanish town of Manto, or Olancho el Viejo; he was well received, and brought back letters from several *padres*, inviting young Hosmore to proceed to Manto, and sending mules to bring him, and the few goods he had, to that place. He immediately paid them a visit, was kindly received, and made proposals for a supply of dry goods, for which they offered specie, cattle, sarsaparilla, &c. They also tendered him, in the mean time, mules and cattle to assist in the formation of the settlement; declaring that the withdrawing of the British from Black River had so injured their trade and former prosperity, that they would, willingly,

use every exertion to open a communication with any new settlers. Having no means of conveying the mules, &c. down the river, Hosmore was obliged to decline the offer. He made cautious inquiries regarding the mines in this part of the country, and procured some specimens of silver, and gold ore, the former of which appeared equal to the Plata de Mina, that I had seen in the Pacific: The situation of several mines was known to some of the former settlers, and a regular survey was once attempted by a Colonel Despard, but, being at an improper season of the year, it failed. Hosmore told me he had stopped on his way down the river to examine two mineral springs, one hot, the other cold, close to each other, near the junction of two of its branches: they are situated at the base of an extensive ridge of mountains, extending through the country, in a westerly direction; and, without doubt, connecting those which form the barrier between the Spaniards of Nicaragua, and the various unconquered Indians to the northward and eastward. The highest part of these ridges appears by the course of the rivers to be about the upper part of the Poyer country; and, as the eastern side, in possession of the Spaniards, is known to be full of gold and silver ores, there can be no doubt that the Indian side is equally rich, in these minerals. In passing, up and down the river, he had landed at the ruins of some of the former English plantations, where he found sugar-cane, plantains, bananas, pine-apples, coffee bushes, &c. vegetating in a state of wild luxuriance. Mr Hosmore's father had transplanted, from thence, several hundred coffee plants; but, owing to their removal from a rich to

a poor soil, I doubt the favourable result of his experiment. Peas, beans, cabbage, and other culinary vegetables of England, were however in a state of great forwardness; and the new settlers found no difficulty in procuring provisions, one draught of the seive being sufficient to supply the settlement with fish for several days; and they could always find plenty of game on the river, and in the woods. These, and trading conveniences, induced them to remain at this place, at present, in preference to ascending higher up, to a richer soil. We were shown the remains of the former church, hospital, and ruins of several houses, all built of brick made in the country—several sawpits, and other indications of the industry of the former settlers were also visible.

A very strong instance of local attachment in one of the old settlers was related to us. When the present people arrived, they found, here, a very old man of the name of Austin, who had been a resident during its prosperity; he was nearly ninety years of age, and, after a variety of adventures, he had recently found his way back to the old place, that he might spend his last days there, and be buried by the side of his former associates. By his directions the remains of the burial-ground had been searched for the grave-stone of one of his oldest companions; he cleared away the weeds and brushwood, and daily visited the spot until his death, which took place some weeks after the arrival of our informants; who, faithful to their promise, buried him by the side of his ancient comrade.

Having remained a few days, the King found it necessary to return towards the Cape, to keep

the festival of Christmas with some of his principal chiefs, according to custom. He considered it prudent to visit General Robinson, who had returned home, and had several of the chiefs staying with him. Leaving Black River in the morning, we arrived at the General's towards evening. His house and establishment seemed to be comparatively comfortable for this part of the world; he had several Indian, and negro slaves; and kept a small quantity of cattle, which were grazing, in a savannah, on the right bank of the river, opposite to his settlement. We found him receiving sarsaparilla from the Poyer and other Indians, for which he gave them any price he thought proper; that commodity is abundant in all the country between Cape Cameron and Cape Honduras; but the inhabitants only collect sufficient to pay for such articles as they absolutely want, beyond which they do not look farther.

Robinson's brothers, Barras, Roncell, and some of the other chiefs received the King with some degree of coolness, encouraged by Robinson, who affected to consider himself an independent chief. We returned to Crota by the same route as formerly; and, in passing through the country, the Kharibees, in various places, and negroes at Patook, complained much of the violent and oppressive conduct of Barras, of which I shall hereafter have occasion to speak, and besought the King's interference. At Crata we were received and treated with the same hospitality as before; a bullock was killed for our provision, and when we embarked to cross Caratasca Lagoon, another, with the remainder of the wine, was given to us, as a Christmas present. Returning by False Cape,

we came to a settlement, on the edge of a savannah, about three miles up Great Cape River, the chief of which, named Hamlar, provided us with a dorie, in which we descended the river, and entered the upper part of the harbour through the communication formerly mentioned, after an absence of about fourteen days.

CHAPTER VIII.

HARBOUR OF SAN JUAN DE NICARAGUA—ATTACK BY AN INDEPENDENT CRUISER—TAKEN AS A SPY—TRIAL AND ESCAPE—CONDUCT OF THE INDIANS—ORDERED TO SAN CARLOS—BONGOS—THE FORT OR BATTERY AND ENTRANCES OF THE RIVER—MANATIS—SERAPIQUI—COMMODORE MITCHELL'S EXPEDITION—ISLANDS—RAPIDS,—ALLIGATORS—ARRIVAL AT THE CASTLE OF SAN JUAN—ITS PRESENT STATE—GREAT RAPID—FORMER INCORRECT STATEMENTS REGARDING THE RIVER.

SHORTLY after the journey last narrated, I visited Balize; and succeeded in forming arrangements there, under the sanction of the Mosquito King, for securing a share of the Indian trade. During the interval of carrying these arrangements into effect, I continued to make short voyages along the shore, visiting, and residing occasionally, at many of the Indian, and Mosquito settlements.

One of these voyages, had a termination which unexpectedly afforded me an opportunity of visiting the Interior of Central America, as far as the city of Leon, within a few miles of the South Sea.

In the year 1802, I left Cape Gracias a Dios,

in a small smack of about fifteen tons burden, with goods to the value of about five hundred pounds, intending to run along the whole coast as far as the river Coclee; and to stop at every river, creek, and settlement, where tortoise-shell, and other produce, could be procured. The King furnished me with three of his people to accompany me as far as Prinzapulko, where I knew I could engage proper hands for the remainder of the voyage. I obtained a considerable quantity of tortoise-shell at Duckwarra* and Sandy Bay. I proceeded from thence to Brancmans, where I had an interview with Governor Clementi, and agreed to purchase all the shell and other articles, that his people might next season collect. On my arrival at Prinzapulko, I entered into agreement with an intelligent Indian, named Brown, mentioned in a former part of this narrative, who, having been brought up in a Creole family at Pearl Kay Lagoon, spoke good English, and three others, to proceed with me; agreeing to pay them in goods, at the rate of five dollars per man, each month, for their services. I could have hired White people, or Creoles, at Pearl Kay Lagoon, on the same terms, but I have always found the Indians more capable of bearing fatigue, easily satisfied, docile and obliging,—consequently better adapted for my purpose.

With these men I left Prinzapulko early in June; and, after trading at Great River, Pearl

* Duckwarra is laid down in the charts as *Duccana*. Ducanna or Duckwarra Lagoon is also represented as joining or running into Sandy Bay, whereas it is separated by a savannah at least six miles across.

Kay Lagoon, Bluefields, and the Rama settlement at Point de Gorda, I arrived at the harbour of San Juan de Nicaragua. It was scarcely daylight when I entered the port, and, before discovering two large schooners, I was under their guns. The appearance of these vessels alarmed my Indians, but it was too late to recede; and I had scarcely come to anchor, when I was boarded by a large boat full of people; the officer, in command, ordered my vessel alongside the schooner, to be searched, and assumed as much importance as if he had made a most valuable capture. I was aware that the Spaniards avail themselves of every portunity to purchase a few dry goods, from the Indian traders as they pass along the coast; and, that the commanders of Port San Juan, and the Castle of San Carlos, not only wink at this contraband trade, but, indirectly, buy goods on their own accounts to a considerable extent, payment being made in gold dust, doubloons, and dollars. I was nevertheless afraid for the result; having a quantity of gunpowder, and cutlass blades, for the Indian trade, knowing these articles to be strictly contraband.

The Commandant of the fort, or battery, having satisfied himself respecting the object of my voyage, told me, contrary to my expectation, that I was at liberty to depart whenever I thought proper.

The schooners were the *Flor-del-mer*, mounting ten, and the *Estrella* eight guns—six pounders; with each a long eighteen pounder on a pivot: they had originally been American privateers, the smallest of them exceeding two hundred and fifty tons, with a crew of fifty men each. The captain of the first mentioned vessel, desirous of informa-

tion, insisted on my breakfasting with him; and, during the time I enjoyed his hospitality, the man who was kept on the look-out, from the mast-head, descried a sail to windward, coming down in the same direction from whence I had arrived. In a moment all was hurry, bustle, and confusion; and, I was annoyed by innumerable questions about the vessel in sight: it was in vain that I assured them I knew nothing about them; and suggested, that she might be one of the Jamaica traders. My assertions were received with distrust, or entirely disbelieved:—a few minutes however put them out of suspense; it became evident that she was a brig of war; and, immediately, preparations were made for action.

As most of my little property was now at stake, I went to the Commandant of the fort, and requested that my small vessel should be taken over the bar, into the river for safety; offering in return, the services of the Indians, to assist in working the guns at the fort; and tendering my own to the Captain of the Estrella. The Commandant coolly observed that his officers strongly suspected I was a spy for the vessel now in sight; but that if I assisted in repulsing her, I would, in some measure, invalid that impression, leaving it however entirely at my own option to act as I judged proper.

By this time the schooners, having springs on their cables, were moored with their broadsides completely commanding the entrance to the harbour. Their commanders ordered the red flag to be hoisted, which was immediately answered by a similar defiance from the vessel in the offing: she took in top-gallant sails, reefed topsails, and in

rounding the point within gunshot, hoisted Buenos Ayrean colours, and I then knew her to be the Patriot vessel Centinela, commanded by Bradford, a brave and intrepid officer, formerly attached to the Mexican squadron under Sir Gregor MacGregor, and General Aurey. The Spaniards immediately began to fire from the battery and both schooners, whilst the brig advanced silently and steadily, towards them, with the evident intention of boarding; and, had she been able to do so, I fully anticipated their capture, as it was with much difficulty that the officers of the schooners, could keep the men to their guns. Fortunately for the Spaniards the breeze died away, almost to a calm, at the moment when the Patriot vessel came in contact with the current setting out of the river; consequently she was under the necessity of letting go an anchor, within musket-shot of the fort and schooners. At this disadvantage, she proceeded to get a spring on her cable; and, before firing a gun, brought her broadside to bear on the schooners, which were moored so close together that the jib-boom end of one was nearly over the taf-rail of the other. In this position, the Centinela continued the action nearly four hours, against twenty-eight pieces of cannon, the random and ill-directed fire of the Spaniards alone preventing them from sinking her at her anchors.

Being by this time much damaged in her hull and rigging, she cut her cable; and, assisted by the current from the river, and a light breeze which sprung up, drifted out of the reach of grape and cannister shot, evidently prepared to repel any attack, if her enemies had dared to become the assailants. The Spanish officers, indeed, cal-

led out to their men "aborda! aborda!" but not one of these gentlemen offered to set the example, by jumping into the boats;—she reached the Corn Islands next day in a sinking state; but, few men were killed on either side.

While still employed at the gun which I assisted in working, the officers of the Flor-del-Mer came on board to congratulate us, on what they should have rather considered an escape than a victory. One of them came, up to me, and looking steadfastly in my face, swore he knew me, and called to the officers on the quarter-deck to desire I might be secured, as I was a prize-master belonging to the Centinela, who had lately taken his vessel, and plundered his person, under the worst circumstances of aggravation and insult. Such a charge as this, after I had, during so many hours, risked my life in defence of their vessels, completely confounded me; and this confusion was, by all present, taken as evidence of my guilt. The rumour of a spy from the insurgent brig being discovered on board the Estrella, soon spread, and when I was carried on board the other schooner, to be put in irons, her crew were desired to see if any of them could recognise me. A hard featured villanous looking fellow stept forward, and accused me of being the sail-maker of the brig in question; that he would swear that when he was boarded and captured, on his last voyage from the Havannah to Truxillo, I had, in my insatiable thirst for plunder, cut his trowsers, in which he had a number of doubloons, with my boarding-knife, and nearly murdered him.

This was considered sufficient evidence; it was

in vain I protested my innocence; I was immediately ironed, and sent under a guard to the fort. My Indians were exceedingly surprised at seeing me brought ashore in this manner; and, before I could fully explain the cause to Brown, I was hurried to the guardhouse.

Next morning, about nine o'clock, I was conducted before the commandant and a number of officers assembled; and, as they appeared to be fully satisfied that I was, or had been, an officer of the Centinela, a paper was presented for signature, which was said to contain the charges made out against me; and the depositions of the two Spaniards now made upon oath.

I resolutely refused, however, to sign this paper, on the ground of my imperfect knowledge of the Spanish language, and having no interpreter on whom I could depend: that I was perfectly innocent, and might, by signing it, criminate myself. They remanded me back to prison; and the commandant of the fort, Don Francisco Sallablanco, sent me some refreshment. In the evening I overheard one of my guards assuring his comrade that the officers were perfectly satisfied of my being a spy; and had, therefore, come to the resolution of executing me without delay. Early in the morning I was again brought before these judges, and desired to sign the paper, but still refused. After a short deliberation, a sergeant and six men, conducted me to the back of the fort; two others were employed to support me as I could not walk without assistance, both legs being in irons; another person carried an empty cask; and a fourth a chair for the com-

mandant. Arrived at the back of the fort the cask was put down, and I was ordered to sit upon it, the commandant placed his chair close beside me, and informed me by means of an interpreter, that I had been regularly tried, and that it was the opinion of all present, that sufficient evidence had been adduced to prove that I was an officer belonging to the Patriot service, and that, having entered the harbour as a spy, they were justified in putting me to death in a summary manner;—he therefore exhorted me to address myself to Almighty God, as in the course of another half-hour I should cease to live. He then ordered the soldiers to load their pieces and draw up in line about twelve yards distant. When the sergeant came forward to blindfold me with a handkerchief, I refused to submit to it; and on turning my head from side to side to prevent it, and as a sign of my innocence—my eye fell upon my poor Indians, who had been brought out to witness the execution. The agitation of my mind at this crisis cannot be expressed: these men being much attached to me, raised that loud and melancholy howl or lamentation, which I had, often, heard them chant at the death of one of their own tribe. Despair fell so heavily on my mind that all hope utterly left me; but on acquiring new courage, I instantly turned to the commandant, who, by this time, had risen from his chair, and observed, in broken Spanish, and English, that, if he was determined to murder an innocent man, a subject of Great Britain, I could die without being blindfolded. Every tongue was now hushed; save those of my poor Indians, expecting the fatal word or signal, which was to expedite me from

a world of strife. I was in the act of recommending my soul to God, when suddenly I heard the splashing of oars; and, a large boat, hitherto concealed by the bushes and bamboos, appeared close to us!

A feeling now darted into my mind, that I should escape the pending catastrophe; and, in consequence, I now and afterwards acted with more boldness than was, perhaps, warranted by my critical situation. The commandant suspended the execution, and I was conducted to the guard-house.

The boat proved to be a government express, down the river from the castle of San Carlos, with a reinforcement of men, under the command of an officer, who was to supersede the present commander. I was shortly ordered before the new commandant, to whom I explained my reasons for having called at the harbour, the time I had been living on the coast, and, the nature of my trade with the Indians. I referred him to papers, found in my vessel, corroborative of my statement; but, unfortunately, he could find no one to read them.

I was afterwards ordered to hold myself in readiness to be sent up the river San Juan; and desired to communicate the same order to the Indians, who were now allowed to visit me. Brown seemed to have his horrid ideas of the Spaniards fully confirmed; and, at that moment, swore vengeance against them, if chance should ever place man, woman, or child, of their country, at his disposal; I told him to keep up the spirits of his companions; that I should never desert them,

even if I lost all; and, that I equally relied on their attachment.

I was again brought before the new commandant, who desired me to sign an inventory of the articles found in my vessel: but, I saw, that it contained not one eighth part of them; that my trunks, and cases, had been broken open, and plundered of nearly all their contents; the soldiers had taken even my apparel and were wearing it before my face, but, I was obliged to be satisfied with an assurance, that all justice would be done to me, at San Carlos. The provisions which I had in my vessel were ordered to be sent ashore for the support of myself and Indians. I have been the more particular on the preceding occurrences, because they show one of the hair-breadth escapes of an eventful life; and, at the same time, explain the cause of my journey into the interior of a country, which, the jealousy of the Spanish government, had hitherto shut up from the inspection of Englishmen.

In the evening three large craft, by the Spaniards called bongos, came from the schooners to the fort, loaded with dry goods, and demijohns, or large jars of brandy and Dutch gin. Into one of these boats, I was put, with two of the Indians; the other two being sent to a separate bongo, all ironed.

I had the liberty of laying myself at full length in the after part of the boat, the Indians being kept forward, so that no communication could take place among us. These boats are from thirty-five, to forty feet in length; the bottom, and sides, to the height of three feet, is composed of a single piece of mahogany or cedar, generally the latter, rounded

similar to that of a canoe, without a keel; the stern square. Their risings consist of two planks from sixteen to eighteen inches broad; and from three and a half, to four inches thick; reaching from stem to stern, and strongly secured, as well as the bottom, by very stout timbers of the wild calabash, bally, or Santamaria wood; in other respects they are fitted up like a ship's launch, their oars are stout poles, about twelve feet in length, at the end of which is a piece of board, four feet long, and eighteen inches wide, tapered off something in the shape of an oar blade;—these oars are secured to the thowel by straps of raw hide. A space of about eight feet in length at the afterpart of these bongos is planted, or decked, within about a foot or eighteen inches under the risings; and over this deck is thrown an arched awning of raw hides, much in the shape of coverings for waggons in England, completely sheltering the passengers from the sun and weather. These boats are from six to seven feet wide, draw from three to five feet water, and are pulled by from sixteen to twenty-two oars. On an average they carry about sixteen tons, and are the largest craft hitherto used on this river. The Padrone or master, and the crew, were natives of Granada *de Nicaragua*, hardy, stout, raw-boned fellows, descendants of Indians; and the boatmen wrought during the day, entirely naked.

The late commandant of the fort, and one of the owners of the Flor-del-Mer, were passengers, and about three o'clock in the afternoon, we entered the river, by the channel to the north or right hand side.

The fort, or rather battery, which I had after-

wards a better opportunity of examining; has twelve pieces of cannon, long iron twenty-four pounders, mounted behind a breastwork of turf and sand, on a wooden platform of great thickness; they completely command the entrance of the harbour, and both mouths of the river. A few houses for the accommodation of the officers and soldiers, are built at the back of the battery, which, altogether, has accommodation for about one hundred men: it may be more properly termed a masked battery than a fort. The island on which it stands, is something less than half a mile in circumference, nearly in the centre of the entrances to the river—the soil is sandy, and overgrown with bamboo, mohoe, and cane shrubs and bushes; the entrance on the south, or larboard side, is nearly half a mile wide, but too shallow to admit a loaded bongo; the other, by which we proceeded, is not so wide, being little more than two hundred yards across; its greatest depth about seven feet, and frequently not more than five; the current in its channel runs stronger than in that which is on the other side, and the island itself seems to have been formed by the accumulation of sand, trees, &c., brought down the river during the rainy season. The main body of the river is here about half a mile wide, and becomes deeper as we ascend from the island.

We pulled close to a low bank, at a place on the south side of the river, where some rude huts had been constructed. Here the people landed for the purpose of cooking, and I was rather cavalierly invited to join them; I answered by pointing to the irons, which had by this time caused my legs to swell, and become exceedingly painful. Don

Raymond, the gentleman before alluded to, seemed to interest himself in my behalf; and after a few minutes conversation with Salablanca, I was allowed to give my parole, not to attempt an escape, or hold any communication with the Indians; and the Padrone with some difficulty filed off my shackles.

I was invited to partake of their evening repast, after which we retired to sleep in the bongo, while the boatmen slept on land around a large fire, which they took care to keep burning during the night. Reflections on the extraordinary occurrences of the last few days, and conjectures regarding my future destiny, prevented me from enjoying much repose, and I was roused, shortly after midnight, by preparations for proceeding. Long before the dawn of day all were on board, and the Padrone commenced his orisons to the Deity in a very loud tone, the crew making responses at intervals, after which, all joined him in singing a hymn to the Virgin. The effect, in the stillness and solitude of the river, was exceedingly impressive.

Proceeding on our voyage, and accompanied by the other two bongos, I succeeded in recruiting my exhausted spirits by obtaining a little sleep, from which I was awoke by Don Raymond to breakfast. The boat during our repast, was fastened to a tree; and on its being finished, the men again resumed their oars. I observed but little current in the river all this day, and it was nearly the same width as above the island at its entrance. In the afternoon we passed a schooner of about eighty tons, which, after being lightened, had been hauled over the bar, into the river for

safety, previous to the arrival of the two schooners from the Havannah.

She had come from Porto Bello, and the owner had proceeded to Granada to dispose of the cargo, and procure another. At sun-set, we landed, and, after supper, rested as on the preceding evening. At about four o'clock, the usual orison and hymn being repeated, we proceeded as before. The river maintained the same aspect as yesterday, and there was no visible difference in its breadth; the banks were low, and lined with patches of long grass, upon which it was evident the manati had been feeding, those singular creatures, being equally numerous here, as in the small creeks, adjoining the harbour.

At breakfast time we came to Serapiqui, where a considerable stream branches off to the southward, and joins the Rio Colorado, which as before stated, empties itself into the ocean about ten miles from the harbour of San Juan. The Padrone told me this branch of the river was distant thirty miles from the battery at the harbour.

Some few years ago the celebrated Captain Mitchell, who commanded an independent privateer, belonging to Carthagena, during the time that place was in the hands of the revolutionists; and also distinguished himself by taking the small island of San Andres, and hanging Gonsales its Governor, having brought his vessel to an anchor off the bar of the colorado, sent three boats up that river, through this branch at Serapiqui, into the river San Juan, descended it and surprised the battery at the harbour before the Spaniards could prepare for an enemy. By this bold manœuvre he captured

two small vessels in the harbour, with the greater part of their cargoes, which, with other goods, lay in the battery ready for shipment.

Most of the Spaniards escaped, but Mitchell spiked their guns, and got clear off with his prizes. Since this expedition no one has ventured to reside at Serapiqui, although it might easily be made defensible, being situated on a high bank, about twenty feet above the river.

Three houses were standing, surrounded by large plantations of the banana, cassava, and plantain; but there were no inhabitants. We remained several hours; and, after noon, proceeded on our voyage. A few miles up we found a very material difference in the current; the river became wider, and shallower; and, for the first time, I observed small islands in the middle, varying from a quarter to half a mile in length. The three bongos kept close together; and, the padrones frequently consulted together as to which side of an island it would be most advisable to keep to avoid the current, invariably following the advice of the padrone in our boat, who seemed the most experienced of the three. Throughout this day the men laboured harder at their oars than during the preceding. At night they fastened their vessels to a tree, supped and slept as usual, and again renewed their progress a little after midnight. In the course of the ensuing morning we came to a very shallow part of the river, where it was with much difficulty that the twenty-two men pulling our boat, could stem the current, and the banks were so muddy, that it was not possible for men to track her up by means of a tow-rope. Great numbers of large alligators were basking on the

muddy banks, appearing at a distance like old decayed logs of wood, or trunks of trees. The noise of our boat ascending these rapid-currents, and the songs of our mariners, invariably made these monstrous reptiles take to the water.

On passing this shallow, which can scarcely be denominated a rapid, we again got into deep water; and, stopping at one of the islands to breakfast, we met with an old Spaniard, and an Indian his attendant: they had come across the country from the city of Cartago, going to Granada on some law business. He had come by the Colorado River, through the Serapiqui branch, into the San Juan—now bargained with the master of our boat for a passage, and seemed happy that he could pursue his journey with comparative ease and safety.

From this man, who spoke a little English, and frequently purchased goods from the traders at Matina, I learnt that an enterprising Spanish merchant, of my acquaintance, residing occasionally at Matina, but principally at Cartago, had incurred the suspicions of the Government there, was imprisoned, and his goods, to the extent of several thousand dollars, seized, on pretence of being in communication with the Independents—a circumstance which rendered me still more anxious relative to my ultimate situation.

In the evening we came to another shallow, where the current was nearly as strong as that which we passed in the morning; the bongos were kept close to the shore, in the counter current, and we got over it by means of hard pulling.

At night we brought up in the middle of the stream, the people being so much fatigued with

this day's hard labour, that they showed no inclination to go on shore. During the night some rain fell, but all the goods were protected from the wet, by being covered with raw hides. Long before day-break we resumed our voyage; and, previous to breakfast, we came to a shallow *rapid*, or place similar to that we passed yesterday; several small islands, which had the appearance of being overflowed during the rainy season, lay in the bed of the river; and, a circumstance here occurred, showing that our old padrone's knowledge of the navigation was not overrated. One of the bongos having got before ours, kept to the larboard side of an island, about half a mile long, by a channel, which appeared broader than the one on the other side which our and the other bongo entered; we passed this island by mere dint of hard labour at the oar. On getting again into deep water, we perceived the bongo, which had tried the other channel, aground in the middle of it, and her people overboard endeavouring in vain to *shove her on:* they were at last obliged to force her back, and come round by our channel. Our old padrone abused the person who had caused the delay, and told us that very few persons knew any thing of the proper course, in ascending the river; and that not a person on the whole Lake of Nicaragua understood it so well as himself. This day was one of excessive labour and fatigue to the people, as they had several small runs to overcome, the deep water being only at intervals, for a mile, or a mile and a half.

On the sixth day, we recommenced our journey as before, and now found the river clearer of *rapids* and islands, its greatest breadth not being

more than a quarter of a mile, and the banks rising ten to fifteen feet above the level of the water. The land appeared composed of a rich black soil, bearing trees of an immense size, chiefly the bullet, or *bulley sour wood*, cedars, and locusts, growing close to the water's edge. In the evening we landed, lighted fires, and slept at a deserted settlement, consisting of four houses, concealed from view by a plantation of bananas, plantains, &c. The old boat-master accommodated me with a hammock, a luxury I had not for a long time enjoyed. Next morning we started at three o'clock every one exerting himself to the utmost, in the hope of reaching the old fort of San Juan in the evening;—we were however opposed to a strong current, the whole day, the padrone asserting that the river was very low at present. The people only ceased from their labour once during the day; and although there were latterly none of those rapids, or shallows, we had encountered on the preceding days, they became so exhausted that they gave up all hope of reaching the castle that night. We accordingly disembarked, cooked our provisions, and slept as before; certain of being there by breakfast time next morning, when we again proceeded, and shortly came to a low island, nearly a mile in length. Our bongo took the lead as usual, through a narrow channel, on the right side of the island, where, in some places, there was barely sufficient space to use their oars:—the other channel I observed to be of much greater width, but not so deep. We shortly came in sight of the castle, which I judged to be about two miles above this last mentioned island. We here

found the river as wide as in any part of its course: the current was strong, but the water, close in with the banks, was deep, and the eddy, in counter current, assisted us in getting up to the only complete rapid we had yet seen. The bongos being hauled into a small basin, apparently dug for the purpose of landing goods, we proceeded to the castle, where I was immediately placed under a guard. Here, for the first time, I exchanged a few words with my Indians, who were now free from irons, but I had barely time to assure them of my regard, when I was hurried into a separate place of confinement. Breakfast was sent to me from the commandant's table; and Don Raymond, and the Spaniard from Cartago, visited and informed me I would remain here until an answer was received from San Carlos fixing my future destination. By the interest of these gentlemen, I was allowed to walk about the place, attended by a soldier. I found the crews of the boats engaged in carrying the goods on their shoulders to a house at a little distance from the landing place, where an officer was apparently taking an inventory of each article.

An old building, having somewhat the appearance of a fortification, situated on an eminence, is the only remaining part of the castle of San Juan; this dilapidated fortress was, as I afterwards learned, the same which had been taken by Lord Nelson when Captain; assisted by a detachment of troops from Jamaica, and a large body of Mosquito and other Indians. It completely commands the rapid in such a manner, that no boat or vessel of any kind could pass; but, having been suffered to become ruinous, a small battery of eight brass field-

pieces had been constructed at the foot of the eminence; two of these guns pointed down the river, two up, and a few across the rapid. The place, independent of the castle and battery, only consists of lodgings for the soldiers, and a few houses, apparently occupied by their wives, or followers.

The rapid is little more than a quarter of a mile in breadth, extending quite across the stream; the strongest part of the current is in the middle. The descent is gradual, like the sloping banks on the shore, which appear not more than five or six hundred yards in length. Some idea may be formed of its force, and of the difficulty of surmounting it, by considering that, on the second morning after our arrival, it required above an hour's exertion of a numerous crew to haul the empty bongos up the stream.

I may here observe, that I had seen Bryan Edwards' account of the Mosquito Shore, and had otherwise heard it asserted that the Rio de San Juan *was navigable through its whole course to the lake of Nicaragua for vessels of considerable burthen*, and that a schooner of thirty tons, had actually sailed up the lake, and afterwards returned, down the river, to Jamaica. Many authors, from this single report of Bryan Edwards, have boldly asserted, that the lake is navigable for ships of the line, and that the San Juan is also navigable for large ships, through its whole course. From what I have already stated, the absurdity of the latter assertion must be very evident, as also the story of the schooner's voyage; for, admitting that in the rainy season, when the river was full, or at its greatest height, she might have stolen past the station at the river's mouth, and got over the mi-

nor rapids, she never could have passed this great rapid, or escaped the vigilance of the garrison here; or finally, at the castle of San Carlos, situated on an eminence, at the entrance of the lake, commanding a view of at least ten miles of the river, and forty or fifty of the Lake of Nicaragua. In short, I consider the whole story fabulous, and not entitled to the slightest credit; but more of this hereafter.

At noon I was invited to dine with the officers of the station, one of whom, in the course of conversation, observed, that although I was considered "a contrabandisto," yet, if I could prove I was not connected with the Patriots, I should have my property returned, in consideration of having assisted in defending the Estrella; but the credulous smile on the countenance of Salablanca gave me to understand that he still considered me what I had at first been represented by my accusers.

CHAPTER IX.

LEAVE FORT SAN JUAN—FINE TIMBER ON THE BANKS—VILLAGE AND FORT OF SAN CARLOS—PROCEEDINGS THERE—RELIGIOUS TRACTS—DEPART FOR GRANADA—THE LAKE OF NICARAGUA—SAN MIGUEL—THE PADRONES ORISONS—VOLCANIC ISLAND—LAND BETWEEN THE LAKE AND SOUTH SEA—ARRIVAL AT GRANADA—EXAMINATION AND IMPRISONMENT—BASE INTERPRETER—DEPARTURE FOR THE CITY OF LEON.

On our first arrival at San Juan, a small canoe had been despatched to San Carlos with letters to the Commandant, whose answer arrived on the third day, instructing Salablanca to proceed to that place with his prisoners. The bongos being again loaded, we reembarked; and, crossing the river to a large building opposite the fort, each bongo received twenty or thirty poles, about twenty-five feet long; and also two long planks which were fixed fore and aft the sides of the boat, to serve as gangways. We now proceeded on our voyage; the river had the same appearance as be-

low the rapid, and was of the same breadth, but the banks rather lower. In the afternoon, we came to a narrower place with higher banks on both sides, composed of light yellow earth, and strata of white clay; here the people laid aside their oars and used the poles. The current was not stronger than in many other parts of the river, but it was shallow, and the bottom more firm and equal. By the use of poles the vessels were impelled against the stream with double the velocity that could have been communicated by oars. The distance pulled could not have been less than six miles, and yet our whole progress, after the greatest fatigue and exertion, did not, during the whole day, exceed twelve miles. Shortly after midnight we resumed our voyage by moonlight, the poles were again used until we had passed a narrow island, nearly three quarters of a mile in extent; here a beautiful reach presented itself, perfectly straight, four or five miles in length, and the current scarcely perceptible: The crews now stuck their poles into a muddy bank, which, from the quantity already there, seemed the general depository of all the staves which had been used for years past. Preparations were made, after breakfast, to avail themselves of a fine breeze; some of the people were sent into the woods for masts, which had been secreted there; and, they contrived, in an awkward bungling manner, to hoist large square sails upon them. After making some progress we descried the castle of San Carlos, the Gibraltar of the Lake of Nicaragua. Having passed the reach, we immediately entered another, larger and more beautiful; the river very wide, the water deep, free from shoals, and the

current scarcely felt. On each bank were trees of an immense size, amongst which I could distinguish the enormous bulk of the cotton tree, cedar, mahogany, bally, locust, sapodilla, various species of the palm, and a vast variety of others totally unknown to me. Shortly after entering this reach we had a full view of the castle, and my Spanish companions began to make preparations for landing. Turning a bend in the river we came at once in view of the lower part of the fort and village now within one mile distant. Here, the river again becomes contracted to about a quarter of a mile in breadth, with a strong current. Our people took in their sails, and plied their oars so vigorously, that we were soon opposite the castle, from the walls of which we were hailed, by an officer, using a speaking trumpet, with as much formality as if hostility had been anticipated. We lay on our oars in the mean time, the bongos continuing to drop astern with the current, until the requisite answers had been given, and permission to approach obtained. Having pulled through the strong current setting out of the lake, we landed in front of the castle, where we were met by the commandant, with a guard, and half the population of the place apparently attracted by curiosity to see *the spy of the Independents, and his "Indios Bravos;"*—their looks gave evidence that they considered my situation desperate.

We entered the fort by a drawbridge of great strength and magnitude, suspended by enormous iron chains; and, through two immense gates, into a long arched passage, having on each side several cells, those to the right appearing to extend

round the whole side of the building. Every door had a strong iron grating, about two feet square, to admit light and air; and there appeared to be prisoners within most of them. Into one of these places I was commanded to enter, and was left to my own cogitations. I gave way for some time to the most melancholy reflections, from which I was agreeably roused by the entrance of a lieutenant and two people, bringing me a supper from the Governor Don Juan Blanco's table, with a bottle of wine and some agua-ardiente. The lady of this lieutenant kindly sent me a pillow and blanket; and he informed me that the Governor would see, and interrogate me in the morning. I remarked to him that the cell, in which I was confined, appeared to be such as is usually appropriated for the reception of felons; and, pointing to the bedstead, bottomed with a half-dressed hide, the stool, and large jar, its only furniture, and to the decorations on the walls, one of them representing a man hanging from a gibbet, and another in the act of being shot, I asked, as well as I could make myself understood, if it was right to confine me in such a place as this previous to my trial?—that I was perfectly innocent, and that the papers found in my vessel would be sufficient to confute, by a mere reference to their dates, the evidence of the rascals who had accused me. Next morning the Commandant informed me that he had been looking over my papers, amongst which were some religious tracts, and ten or twelve New Testaments, which he seemed to consider likely to be of a political nature; but that, as he could not find any of his people to explain them properly, he had determined to send them to Granada. He

gave me liberty, in the mean time, to walk about the place, of which I immediately availed myself; and I was shortly joined by the friendly lieutenant, who invited me to his quarters, where we were visited by several other officers, one of whom I fortunately recognised to be a person who I had once seen on board a Jamaica trader. He also recollected me, and immediately reported the circumstance to the Governor, who ordered me to attend him next day at his house, which is situated on rising ground near the castle, commanding an extensive view of the lake, and the village of San Carlos. The village contains about one hundred and fifty houses, the walls are of clay or mud, of considerable thickness, neatly white-washed, which gives them the appearance of cleanliness and solidity. They are roofed with the branches of a particular species of palm, which are from twenty to thirty feet long, and, after being split the whole length of the branch, they are well adapted for the purpose, the pendant leaves overlaying each other, on the outside, as compactly as slates. These serve to keep out the rain several years without being changed.

The house of the Commandant, however, and those in the garrison, are covered with tiles. The inhabitants, including the garrison, I supposed to be, in number, about seven hundred persons.

It is only in very recent charts that any notice has been taken of this fort, which may be denominated the Key of the Lake, defending it, on the only quarter supposed to be approachable from the Atlantic; and, consequently protecting, on that side, the towns of Nicaragua, Granada, Trinidad,

San Miguel, San Filippe, Massaya, Monagua, Matares, Puebla Nueva, the City of Leon, and other places in the interior. The castle is situated on an eminence of considerable elevation above the lake; but the approach is not so steep as to render the ascent to it difficult. It is a sort of parallelogram, facing a sinuosity of the river at the upper reach at its *embouchure* from the lake, and whose lines are longer towards the lake itself, than towards the interior. Towards the latter quarter the land is low, presenting an impassable swamp, or marsh, overgrown with mangrove, wild plantain, and small bamboos. The castle is surrounded by a deep dry ditch, faced with stone from its bottom to the embrasures: the opposite side is also walled, and studded with large hardwood palisades, or *chevaux de frise;* its only entrance is by the drawbridge already mentioned. The strong current of the river on two sides, together with the swampy nature of the ground in its rear, renders the position of this fortress very strong. It commands an extensive view of the lake, and of the islands of Sonate, Madera, Omptepec, Zapatera, &c.; also, ten or twelve miles of the river San Juan.

On the afternoon of the day following that last mentioned, I waited on the Governor, who had now determined to send me across the lake, along with my books and papers,* to Granada; and said that,

* The Religious Tracts and Testaments which excited his apprehensions, had been received from the Rev. Mr Armstrong of Balize, to be distributed among the British settlers on the Mosquito Shore, and such Spanish or other traders, as might, in the course of my voyage, be desirous of having them.

in consequence of the information communicated, by one of his officers, he was inclined to believe I was merely an agent of the contraband traders on the coast. He assured me that my Indians should be taken care of during my absence, and, inviting me to spend the evening with his family, treated me with the greatest hospitality, endeavouring however to draw information from me on subjects of a political nature; and regarding occurrences which, for fear of implicating myself, I found it necessary to appear not to understand. Occasionally sheltering myself from his questions by answering, "no intiende Senor,"—expressions of suspicion and disappointment repeatedly escaped from him. He stated that, when Truxillo in the Bay of Honduras was attacked by the insurgent General Aurey, he was commandant of the place; and, that Aurey, who had landed his troops about three miles from the town, had been defeated by the Charib troops alone,—the Spaniards never having come out of their shelter. I happened to know more of the affair, and of the nature of the expedition, than he was aware of; and, although I found it necessary to be prudent, I parried many of his inquiries on other subjects by questions regarding Truxillo, and the attack upon it, which he did not feel disposed to answer. I was accommodated with a hammock in the piazza of his house; and being to depart for Granada next morning, his good lady and her daughter presented me with a quantity of chocolate, bread, cheese, eggs, wine, and cane spirits (agua-ardiente del cania.) My critical situation called forth the most tender expressions of their pity, and the kindest demonstrations of benevolence. Requesting me to take the ham-

mock, blanket, and pillow for my accommodation on the voyage across the lake, they retired, commending me to the protection of the Virgin, and all the saints in the Calendar. Before daybreak I was conducted to the landing place, and embarked in a large boat, usually employed by Government as a despatch-boat for conveying soldiers and stores from Granada to San Carlos. It was in no respect superior to the bongo in which I ascended the river, and was, in like manner, navigated by a Creole of Granada and twenty-two men, accompanied by Señor Raymond, my former companion, who expressed some surprise at finding that I was ordered to Granada, considering it by no means prudent to send so suspicious a person as myself, into a quarter so jealously shut up from the knowledge of the English, especially at this critical period. I dare say, however, he consoled himself with the supposition that I should never be allowed to return. For my own part I had now little doubt that my innocence would be made manifest; and as I had often wished to visit this noble lake, I began to contemplate the prospects before me, with more satisfaction. There was not a breath of wind to ruffle the smooth surface of the lake; but, as the sun rose, we had a slight breeze from the south-east, and the same kind of awkward sail was used as in ascending the river: the *tack* was occasionally boomed out, or, as the wind changed, carried forward sometimes nearly to the stern, which drove our clumsy craft faster to leeward than a-head. The beauty of the scene which we now beheld—the sun being nearly an hour high—is far beyond my feeble powers of description;—to the westward I could distinguish several islands,

which appeared in a line extending north-west and south-east, five or six leagues;—one being of great height, the others lower. From the castle to the southward, the land appeared broken and indistinct, like low islands, trending away to the north-west.

We passed near to several small islands which lay in the immediate vicinity of the mainland; many of them were not more than about half a mile long, low, and covered with wood. About ten o'clock we came opposite the village of San Miguel, said to be fortified on account of *los Indios bravos;* and, landing on a small island, we lighted a fire and breakfasted, the crew upon *passas*, or sun-dried beef, chocolate, and plantains: Don Raymond, the Padrone and myself, faring more sumptuously. We afterwards renewed our voyage with a fine favourable breeze; booming out our sail on both sides: the yard squared itself, having neither lifts nor braces; and, by looking over the side, I judged we were going at the rate of four or five miles an hour. During the morning we passed several *Hattos* or grazing farms, situated in the large savannahs which extend from the brink of the lake, as far back as the eye can reach, and seem terminated only by ridges of hills, in the extreme distance, to the north. Immense herds of cattle and horses were feeding in these savannahs, and I also distinguished mules, but no sheep were to be seen. The cattle appeared to be of a large breed, similar to those of Buenos Ayres. Destitute of books, and apprehensive of creating an unfavourable impression by asking many questions of Señor Raymond and the Pa-

drone, I amused myself by observing and reflecting on the entirely new scenes before me, and by trying occasionally to count or estimate the number of cattle on a given space; but I was sometimes, after counting as far as four or five hundred, obliged to relinquish the task.

Shortly after noon the breeze dying gradually away, our Padrone vociferated loudly for the aid of all the saints. He did not content himself with invoking *San Antonio*, generally applied to by the Spanish and Portuguese sailors, but whom, by a rather contemptuous epithet used after his name, he seemed to think could do no good on this fresh water lake; but finding none of them likely to interfere in his favour, recourse was had to the oars; and at about three o'clock we landed at a Hatto, where a rude wharf of large stones had been constructed. At this farm-house we were received with much civility by the inmates, consisting of the farmer, his wife, and two fine young women, all Creoles of the country. A large quantity of jerked beef, and cheeses, had been got ready for the Padrone, whose arrival seemed to have been expected. These articles being shipt, we proceeded on our voyage, hauling off rather farther from the shore than during the fore part of the day; and we shortly distinguished land on the opposite side of the lake, in the direction of the town of Nicaragua, appearing low and in broken lumps like islands scarcely visible above the water's edge; also, three large islands gradually rising to the north-west. We had a favourable wind during the night, and I was told in the morning that we were to the westward of the town or village of Trinidada.

The Padrone awoke me in the morning by a most noisy orison, in which he was joined by his crew; but some shrewd looking fellows among them seemed to be more in jest than otherwise, contending with each other who should make the most noise, and name the greatest number of saints. I ventured to remark that they had frightened the breeze, or displeased the saints, by making so much noise, as, by the time they finished, the wind had entirely failed, and they would, as a punishment, have to labour at their oars. We had for some time been drawing towards an island upon which we breakfasted as before. This island, like others in its vicinity, is composed of immense rocks, and the water round it is clear and deep. Large trees grow on every spot where there is soil; but although there are many such islands on this side of the lake very beautiful and picturesque in appearance, few or none of them are inhabited, or fit for cultivation, except as gardens or vineyards. This breeze having again sprung up, we hastened on board, and were soon under sail. I still perceived a number of grazing farms, but nearer to each other than those we had seen on the preceding day, situated like them, in savannahs covered in all directions by herds of cattle. The country was evidently becoming more populous as we approached to the west, and several bongos appeared sailing in the direction of Granada and Nicaragua.*

* According to a survey executed by means of a water-level in the year 1781, by Don Matias de Galvez, a Spanish engineer, the surface of the Lake of Nicaragua is about one hundred and thirty-five feet above the Gulf of Papagayo: and, the Lake being about 89 feet deep, its

About ten o'clock we began to leave the north side, and with a more favourable breeze to stretch across the lake. Shortly after noon we passed an island, which, rising in majestic grandeur from the bosom of the lake, seems to be of volcanic origin.

The lower part, and nearly two-thirds of the ascent, is covered with wood of large growth; vegetation above that height appeared more scanty; and the summit, which terminates in a peak, was entirely bare. From the nearest point of view in the direction in which we sailed, I estimated its length at seven or eight miles. Directly towards the south-west no land was visible, which coincided with a statement made by the old Spaniard who joined us coming up the river, and who had in his possession a manuscript chart, in which the land in that direction, is laid down as being low, and not above fifteen miles or thereby in breadth, across from the Lake to the South Sea.

Having passed this and other islands, we came in view of the city of Granada, standing on a gently rising ground, at a small distance from the lake. In the evening we landed at the Playa, near which I perceived a small fort or battery in the shape of a crescent or half moon, with embrasures for twelve guns facing the lake. The carriages seemed falling to pieces, and the whole battery was in a state of dilapidation and ruin.

bottom consequently is forty-six *Spanish* feet above the level of the South Sea. The surveyor ascertained the level by three hundred and thirty-six stations of ascente 604 ft. 8 in. 8 li., and three hundred and thirty-nin, stations of descent, 470 ft. 1 in. 7 li.—*Humboldt's Narrative*, Vol. 6th. Part 2d., p. 797.

On landing we were received by some black soldiers, stationed as guards at some warehouses built here for the reception of goods. One of these men informed me, in good English, that he had run away from his master, a Honduras merchant; and, travelling from Omra to Guatémala, had there entered the Spanish service,—had been sent to Realejo,—then to the city of Leon,—and, finally, to Granada. He expressed an inclination to do me any service in his power, and I perceived that the whole of the company, to which he belonged, was made up of such runaway slaves, chiefly from the Island of St Domingo;—they were all well armed and clothed. The Playa, or landing-place, is a mere open beach without any wharf or other conveniency for shipping goods, which have to be carried to and from the Bongos in small canoes, or on the backs of men or mules, a good cable's length into the water, which is here very shallow, with a bottom of fine sand. The approach to the city is by a good road; and about half a mile from the lake we passed a large monastery and, two churches in the *Calle de Playa*, before entering the market place. I was conducted directly to the Governor's house, before which is a handsome gateway; and, while waiting in the porch until called for, I noticed over the inner-door, a poorly painted portrait, bearing the modest inscription, "*Viva Ferdinando Septimo, el libertador adorable de Europa!!*"

I was shortly ushered into a large hall, where I found the acting Governor, several military officers, a priest, and an interpreter, through whom a great many questions were put to me; but, so far as I could understand Spanish, the interpreter gave re-

plies essentially different to those elicited from me. Being ordered to withdraw in charge of a sergeant and two soldiers, I was conducted to the barracks, and thrust into a cell similar to that which I had first occupied at San Carlos. The black soldier, who had spoken to me at the landing-place, told me, through the grating, that it was the conviction of the Governor and his friends, that I actually was a spy of the Revolutionists; as was more particularly evident by the pamphlets in my possession. Suspecting this man was sent to obtain information to be carried to the Governor, I related particularly how I received these books, and the object of my voyage; observing to him that the answers I had given had not been fairly interpreted: and, I entreated him to make this known to the Governor, from whom he returned about ten o'clock with a supper, some agua-ardiente, and a bottle of wine; with an intimation that I should undergo another examination in the morning.

On sounding this fellow I found him shrewd and intelligent: he hinted that, were I to request it, he himself might be permitted to act as interpreter; he owned that he wished, from motives of self-interest, that he might be ordered to attend me to the city of Leon, an idea which I encouraged, that I might secure his confidence, being desirous, now that I gave up my small property as lost, to see the country.

My cell was intolerably hot, but having undergone much fatigue during the day, I soon forgot my sorrows, and slept until aroused by the beating of the *reveille*, and the noise of the soldiers hurrying to the parade at daybreak next morning. In a few minutes the bustle was over; a pass-

ing soldier threw me a bundle of cigars, and kindly brought me some fire to light one: he expressed much compassion for my situation; and, giving a cautious glance to each side, told me, "los patriotes" were "muy bueno;" and vented some execrations against the present government. About eight o'clock the soldiers returned, and my door was crowded by people whose curiosity was excited by the report that an Englishman, employed at San Juan by the Patriots, as an agent and spy, had arrived. Many of them evinced a kindly feeling in my favour, who evidently dared not express themselves in other language than that of pity and regret for my present situation. Others there were who cursed me as an insurgent, a spy, a pirate, and a heretic,—but these were few in number compared with others who never retired from the grating, without throwing something into the cell, so that in the course of the morning the floor was covered over with cakes, gingerbread, cheese, chocolate, cigars, and not a few quartos, medios, reals, dollars and other coins. In this whimsical situation I found myself placed like a wild beast in a cage, unable, if ever so much inclined, to withdraw for one moment, from observation. I had this consolation, however, that nearly all my visitors seemed to consider themselves bound to pay something for the sight, or contribute towards my support. Many of them, who were evidently afraid of being observed by those attached to the existing government, hastily threw money into the cell and withdrew; almost every one who peeped in, had a cigar in his mouth, and the smoke and heat became so intolerable, that I found myself

in danger of suffocation, which obliged me to beg a few minutes respite, that fresh air might be admitted. When the smoke began to disperse, I set myself to collect the vairous articles which had been thrown into my cell; and was agreeably surprised to find that the contributions in cash amounted to twenty-seven dollars, besides sweetmeats, chocolate, cheese, gingerbread, cigars, &c. sufficient for several week's consumption. About eleven o'clock my negro friend brought me a substantial breakfast, and a bottle of wine; and what rather surprised me—the chocolate was in a silver pot, on a tray covered by a clean white napkin. I mentioned the donations I had received in the morning, to show that I could now reward him if he acted faithfully, giving him a dollar *as earnest*, and impressing upon him the certainty that I should be able to provide amply for every expense if we were sent to Leon:—He retired, assuring me I might depend upon him, and carrying my thanks to the good lady, the Governor's mother, who had sent me breakfast. I was again visited by several persons desirous of seeing the pirate, patriot, or heretic; for, in the opinion of all, I must be one of these, and consequently an extraordinary character. A heretic, they agreed, I must be, at all events, as I neither prayed, crossed myself, nor pulled off my hat, on passing the churches. In the evening, after the acting governor had taken his *siesta*, I was conducted to his house, and examined by the same assemblage as on the preceding night, and by two additional *padres;* the negro was there, and the former interpreter, who having shamefully mis-

interpreted my reply to a question regarding the introduction of British goods at Matina, and persisted in eluding my meaning, I requested the negro to make known, to his Excellency, the ignorance and wilful prevarication. This at once called forth the malignity of the man, an old Spaniard, who could not read one word of English :—he denounced me immediately as an insurgent and spy, alluded to the books, and observed to the padres, who had put many questions on the subject, that he had no doubt I had distributed pamphlets in the Spanish tongue ; and that I ought to be sent to Leon, where it would soon be ascertained what, and who I was. As I persisted in declaring my innocence, and expressed my willingness to proceed to Leon, the Governor informed me I should depart next day, assuring me, through my negro interpreter, that I should want for nothing,—that his duty compelled him to act, at present, with rigour against those who were known to be disturbers of the government, but that if it eventually turned out that my representations were correct, Don Miguel Seravia, the governor of the district of Leon, who was the proper person to decide on my case, would treat me with the greatest justice. I was conducted back to the barracks, ordered a better apartment than the cell I had last occupied, and had liberty to walk about in the square. Next day I again attended the deputy-governor, who informed me that every thing had been prepared for my departure to Leon, and that a sergeant, my negro friend, and three other black soldiers, well armed and mounted on mules, would form my es-

cort. A good horse, a pair of boots, and enormous iron spurs, had been provided for me; and in about twenty minutes after setting off, we found ourselves clear of the city, on a good road, sufficiently broad to admit of our riding abreast,

CHAPTER X.

MASSAYA — REMARKABLE STRATA OF LAVA BETWEEN THE LAKES OF LEON AND NICARAGUA—WHEEL CARRIAGES—MULES, &c.—MONAGUA—HOSPITALITY OF THE CURA—MATARES—MAMA-TOMBA—MOUNTAIN ROAD AND GAME—NAGAROTTA — PUEBLO NUEVA — PLAIN OF LEON—CHAIN OF THE ANDES—ANSWER TO BARON HUMBOLDT—ARRIVAL AT LEON—ITS VICINITY TO THE SOUTH SEA—STORY OF ENGLISH SAILORS—FINAL EXAMINATION AND ACQUITTAL—DON ALLEMAGNE—HIS VALUABLE TRADE—CITY OF LEON—ITS HOUSES, &c.—PROVISIONS—LUXURIOUS MODE OF LIVING—URBANITY OF THE GOVERNOR.

We left Granada about three o'clock; the sergeant and three of the men who formed my escort were from San Domingo, and generally spoke French, the other was the English negro, who expressed himself much pleased at the journey. I considered it my interest to pay court to these black guards as early as possible; and therefore, at the first *pulperio* house we came to, I invited them to drink wine, brandy, or whatever else they liked best; assuring them that, so far as my purse went, it

was at their service. The English negro swore I was an *innocent* man, and had no cause to fear the result of my journey, which would be made as agreeable to me as possible; and, by way of a proper commencement, they, with the exception of the sergeant, who appeared to be a very steady man, got nearly drunk.

The country through which we passed was well cultivated, producing considerable quantities of maize, plantains, and bananas. We entered Massaya about eight o'clock, and on alighting at the Cuartel in the square, I found myself very seriously indisposed with violent pains in the head, back, and loins; accompanied by great sickness—alarming symptoms in a person like me inured to the climate, and I entreated for medical assistance, but there was none to be obtained in the place. My escort, who had reported to Colonel Sacassa (the father of the deputy-governor of Granada) our arrival, brought me a good supper and a bottle of wine: and, what I prized still more, three complete suits of light clothes, consisting of gingham jackets, trowsers with loose feet to them, shirts, vests, and a straw-hat, with a brim as large as an umbrella;—all nearly new, with an intimation that they were presented "to the sick Englishman" by a son of the Colonel, who also let me know that as my illness was probably occasioned by mere fatigue in a warm climate, I would be recovered before morning; but if not, that I need not proceed.

I awoke early, with little feeling of my former illness; and the distance to our next stage, Managua, being about seven leagues, it was necessary to set forward immediately so as to accomplish the journey in the morning, before the heat be-

came oppressive. The road was still exceedingly good, and for nearly five miles lay through fields of maize, separated by wooden fences. We then entered a thick forest; on emerging we found ourselves at the entrance of a considerable village, in which few persons were yet awake. My escort made a thundering noise at the door of a small *pulperio*, commanding the inmates to open, in the King's name, and produce the best liquor the house could afford, for that they were "soldados del Rey," requiring refreshment. Some aguardiente and tobacco were produced, but when I offered to pay, the sergeant desired me to put up my money, observing that "the fellow's liquor was bad, and not worth the trouble." This village is situated half-way between Massaya and Monagua. The road, after leaving the village, continues through woods; and shortly ascends a considerable eminence, from whence we had a clear prospect of both the Lakes of Leon and Nicaragua, and also the town of Monagua, in which several churches stood conspicuous. On the top of this eminence we crossed a strata of lava, about five hundred yards in breadth, sounding, when struck, like metal, the surface partially decomposed. It had, at some period, burst from a mountain which we saw at some distance to the left of us, and the stream had evidently spread as it reached the low country. I dismounted and walked slowly across to examine the nature and effects of this stream, whose course I could clearly discern for many miles in a direction completely crossing the country between the Lakes of Nicaragua and Leon, close to the latter: and, I can

confidently assert, that it had to all appearance effectually shut up that communication between the lakes which, hitherto, has been supposed to exist, and is laid down as existing, in every map or chart hitherto published. The mountain from which the lava flowed, must not be confounded with that of Granada, although it is nearly of the same height; and perhaps this eruption, which, in my opinion, has decidedly separated the two lakes, may be the same mentioned by Inarras, who, speaking of the extinguished volcano of Massaya says, "at a small distance from this, there is another volcano, called Nindiri, remarkable for an eruption in 1775, when it discharged a torrent of lava that rolled into the lake of Massaya," (or Leon), "in which it destroyed the fish, and heated the lands contiguous to its passage, to so great a degree, that all the cattle feeding on them perished." *

In our descent to the plain we overtook several mules laden with Indian corn; and also a few large wains, or waggons similarly loaded, drawn by twelve, and some of them by fourteen oxen, very clumsily yoked. The total absence of iron about these carriages is a proof of its scarcity in the country; the wheels were of immense circumference, and the rim at least ten or twelve inches over. The axles were also of wood, on which the friction made such a noise as to be heard at a mile's distance. The waggoners and muleteers very officiously drove their cattle to one side to let us pass,—uncovering their heads to the escort with great submission.

* History of Guatemala. London, 1824, page 69.

We entered Monagua about nine o'clock, and rode directly to the house of the alcalde, from whom the sergeant demanded provisions for his party. After giving the negro soldier money to buy wine, &c. for the entertainment of the escort, I endeavoured to rest myself in an open apartment, but was soon annoyed by finding the house beset by people anxious to get a sight of the *Independente*. I had no remedy but patience, and I endeavoured to bear their scrutiny without manifesting discontent; many of them laid down money before their departure, and I was at last relieved from their troublesome attentions by the *cura* of the place, who kindly procured the sergeant's permission to take me to his own house where I was free from intrusion. After an excellent dinner, followed by coffee, my worthy host, Senor Polycarpo Inygojen, retired, according to the universal custom in these countries, to enjoy his *siesta*; and, a hammock being slung for me, I was requested to do the same; the room was darkened, and in a few minutes the house was as quiet, as if it had been midnight. In the evening I was questioned regarding my connection with the Patriots, and the progress of the revolution in Mexico and South America; but I was necessarily obliged to give general and very cautious replies.

My good host seemed so pleased with me, that he wrote to his friend the Governor of Leon in my favour; and requesting that, if I should be declared innocent of the charges against me, I might be permitted to remain with him a few days on my return; and during the remainder of the evening treated me with the greatest kindness and hospitality.

Next morning we recommenced our journey about three o'clock, proceeding through fields of maize, and plantations of cocoa. About daybreak we entered a savannah which was tolerably free from wood; and, shortly afterwards, ascended a hill from whence we again had a delightful view of the lakes and islands. Several light and loaded bongos were sailing on the lake of Leon, which, with the beautiful country on its borders, formed an enchanting scene. At the bottom of this hill, and at a short distance from the lake, stands the town or village of Matares; (or Maytiare) and at a distance of some miles, in the lake, there is a high conical island, named Mama Tomba, which my companions assured me was a volcano, and had often been in an active state. It exhibited no symptoms of eruption at present; but it does not appear to be laid down in any map that I have seen, and may perhaps have been mistaken, by geographers, for the *Volcan de Leon*, or *Volcan Viejo*.

We reached Matares about nine o'clock, and proceeded to the *Puebla*, a house set apart in most Spanish American towns, where there is no passado, for the reception of travellers. This place contains about three hundred houses, a market place, in the middle of the town as usual, and two churches. The alcalde furnished such provisions as were required. I had an opportunity of bathing in the lake, and I found myself much invigorated and refreshed by it: the water was very clear, and appeared to be of great depth, the edges of the lake bounded by immense rocks.

Next morning we renewed our journey at three o'clock. The road is for some miles on the ele-

vated border of the lake, but shortly ascends a mountain, having the appearance of being part of the broken chain of the Andes. I had some difficulty in forcing my horse up the steep ascent, which is too perpendicular for wheel-carriages. We passed several mules laden with cocoa and Indian corn, on their way to Leon. On arriving at its summit, the road, which is tolerably good, continued through woods apparently abounding in monkeys, guams, curassows and other game; particularly quails, partridges, and large pigeons; the two latter scarcely avoiding our horse's feet. The steep part of the ascent is not more than about a mile and a half in length; and appears to be the only part of the route between Granada and the South Sea impassable for wheel carriages. On reaching the highest part, it continues a distance of seven or eight miles, along a high ridge, with deep valleys on each side, completely covered with wood; and then gradually descends to a level plain, extending the whole way to Leon.

We entered Nagarotta, a small village, about ten o'clock, and proceeding to the Puebla, were furnished with breakfast and supper, by the Alcalde of the place; the escort obtaining from me as usual, the means of procuring wine, aguaardiente, and other luxuries. We left Nagarotta at the usual hour in the morning, by a road through woods abounding in game. We saw many deer among the trees, and crossing the road. We passed several waggons, and mules, on their way to Leon, loaded with Indian corn, cocoa, &c. We arrived early at Puebla Nueva, after a very pleasant ride, and repaired to the Puebla, a mud hut. Here the serjeant assumed airs of great impor-

tance, for instead of going to the Alcalde, he sent for that person to come to him. He accordingly made his appearance with his Indian badge of office, a handsome silver-headed cane. The sergeant told this native functionary that he was the bearer of important despatches for the Governor of Leon; and ordered him to furnish a breakfast "fit for a gentleman of his consideration!" The village, consisting of about one hundred mud houses and a church, has only lately been established, and appears to be exclusively inhabited by Indians, as I did not perceive any European, Spaniard, or priest. Being shut out from any communication with the lake, its only advantages seem to be, that it is on the road from the lake of Nicaragua to Leon; and in the vicinity of rich land, bearing heavy crops of Indian corn, and cocoa, and forms a resting place for carriers and travellers coming over the heights. Having to make our entry into Leon the following day, the soldiers soon employed themselves in cleaning their arms and accoutrements, not forgetting to feast on the best fare the place afforded.

In the morning we again renewed our journey; the road was very good, and lay through a level well wooded country abounding in game. Deer were frequently seen on the road, and stopped to gaze on us, attracted apparently by the soldiers red jackets, until they were within a very short distance. We passed several cultivated farms; and in some of the court yards, we saw deer mixed with the cattle, as if domesticated. Several large waggons and mules were on the road, and every appearance indicated our approach to a populous city. About seven in the morning we emerged from the woods into what may properly be desig-

nated the plain of Leon, covered by immense fields of Indian corn, and large grass plains extending as far as the eye could reach, covered with numerous herds of cattle, and horses; many of the latter would have been considered beautiful even in Europe. To the right, we had a view of a small part of the lake; and, to the left, at some distance, of an elevation on which stood a mansion, belonging as I was told, to a Spanish officer, commanding a prospect of the intermediate country between the lake and South Sea. We had a glimpse of the latter from a high part of the road, but the sergeant's fear of being observed and considered remiss in his duty, and his anxiety to reach Leon preventing me from going off the road, or halting to admire the scene. Although the land in the vicinity of the lake, and around us, was in general low pasture and corn fields, highlands, and mountains of great elevation, were distinctly visible at a distance to the north, and north-east, the recommencement, no doubt, of the broken chain of the Andes.

The Baron Humboldt, in his work on South America, regrets the want of information respecting this part of Nicaragua and Costa Rica; and observes, that "it would be of much importance to ascertain whether an uninterrupted chain of mountains exists in this direction." In reference to the learned Baron's inquiries, I can affirm, that the first opening, or complete separation of this chain, is between the lake of Nicaragua, and the gulf of Papagayo; that the mountains and volcanic chain again begin to rise to the north-west of that position, and continues to within about twelve leagues of the city of Leon, where it is a

second time cut off, but again appears to the north-east of that city, and north of the Lake of Leon, the mountains continuing to rise in elevation as they stretch northward, and eastward, above the sources of the great rivers which fall into the Atlantic at Bluefields, Cape Gracias a Dios, and into the Bay of Honduras. Nature, by separating this otherwise insurmountable barrier, seems here to indicate the proper points where a communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans might be accomplished; but, on this subject I shall have occasion to treat more at large hereafter.

Before we entered the city, we passed the cathedral, a building of considerable magnitude in the form of a cross, surrounded by the houses and gardens of the clergy. The great beauty of these gardens and their delightful situations, in every respect evince the usual judgment of the holy fathers in selecting places for the establishment of that church, which, whatever influence its splendid worship may have had in bringing part of the Indians to a certain degree of civilization, is alleged to have been the means of keeping the lower orders, inhabiting some of the fairest portions of the globe, in a state of helpless ignorance.

As we rounded the point, on which the cathedral stands, we crossed a stone bridge, over what, at this time, appeared no larger than a small brook; but which, in the rainy season, may be a considerable stream, running in the direction of the South Sea. By an easy ascent, we then came to the suburbs, the houses one story high, built of hardened clay white washed. Having passed two or three mean looking streets, we entered the

city, and the sergeant proceeded immediately to the Government House with his despatches. I did not wait long until I was ordered, by an officer, to follow him; and, being ushered into an apartment, Don Miguel Seravia in a few minutes made his appearance. He addressed me with the mildness and urbanity of a gentleman, inquiring, in good English, what unfortunate circumstance had induced me to enter the harbour of San Juan? Encouraged by his manner, I briefly related every thing that had happened to me then, and subsequently. The packet of papers, and the pamphlets that had created so much distrust, were in his hands; he read and examined part of the latter, and referred to my papers, among which were some invoices of goods intrusted to me, and some letters from my family in England. I directed his Excellency's attention to the dates of these papers, which clearly proved that I could not have been present at the capture of the vessels, or guilty of the crimes charged against me. He seemed convinced in a moment of my innocence, and expressed some dissatisfaction at the stupidity of the Commandants who had ordered me forward, telling me that I should forthwith return by the same route.

In the meantime I was ordered to one of the apartments of the Cuartel, usually appropriated for the accommodation of officers; but charged not to quit these barracks, or to have free communication with the inhabitants of the city. An officer conducted me to the Cuartel, which forms a large square of houses one story high, and contained about two hundred men. In the mess-room, I

was introduced to some of the officers in command of the troops then in the city, who treated me with attention, but marks of suspicion and distrust could not be concealed; and many of them annoyed me with questions calculated to make me commit myself, in regard to my supposed connection with the Independents.

A sumptuous breakfast was served, consisting of fish, flesh and fowl; with wine in abundance; and, being now relieved from further serious apprehensions, I retired and enjoyed undisturbed repose, until I was summoned to a dinner, at which the greatest profusion prevailed.

In the evening I was visited by an English sailor, whose story confirmed, not only every thing I had heard as to the vicinity of the South Sea to the Lake of Leon, (contrary to what is laid down in most charts), but, that the communication therewith is very easy; and also completely corroborating the almost incredible accounts of the old Buccaniers, as to the supineness, insecurity, and defenceless state of the Spanish towns in this quarter of the world. He stated, and his story was confirmed by other persons with whom I conversed, that having been some time on board the Buenos Ayrean frigate the Consequentia, he, and his companions, had become dissatisfied with the officers, and determined to quit the service the first opportunity. Accordingly, when he and six of his companions, were put on board a prize, captured off the harbour of Realejo, with a prize-master and four others, they took the opportunity to secure the arms of the others, and, getting some provisions, spirits, arms, and ammunition, into a whale-boat, they quitted the vessel, with the intention of sur-

rendering to the Spaniards. Having become too much intoxicated to follow their original plan of making their way to a Spanish port, they drifted ashore on the beach to the southward of Realejo, without knowing where they were:—having hauled up the boat, they renewed their drunken frolic; quarrels arose, and their ringleader, a desperate fellow, was for shoving off the boat, and joining some of the privateers cruizing on the coast: this led to a fight, in the course of which he was run through the body with a boarding-pike. This fatal occurrence having brought them to their senses, they turned the boat upside down, put the dying man under her, and went in search of fresh water. On their return to the boat, they found that their comrade had breathed his last. They buried him in the sand, drank the remainder of the spirits, and in a state of intoxication proceeded into the interior of the country by a small path, discovered in searching for water, which led them into the main road, leading to the city of Leon. They shortly descried some Spaniards, who, alarmed at the approach of armed seamen, immediately fled. The fellows continued their route to the city, and entered the suburbs without meeting the least opposition. Seeing a large house to the left, they turned aside to it; and, going into the court-yard or Quadra, proceeded to a piazza, where a gentleman in a clerical habit appeared much alarmed at their intrusion. This emboldened them to demand spirits, which being immediately supplied, they again became incapable of exertion. The person on whom they had thus intruded, proved to be the Archbishop of Leon, who was at first much disturbed, but having recovered his presence

of mind, despatched some of his domestics to the Governor, who immediately ordered a company of soldiers to his relief; and the intoxicated sailors were forthwith carried to one of the guard-houses of the city. In the meantime, a great alarm was created, that the Independent forces had landed, taken Realejo, and were advancing on Leon.

Fortunately for these men, the worthy Archbishop influenced the Governor in their favour, In the mean time, people were despatched to the coast. They found the boat on the beach, and by the traces of blood, discovered the fate of the ringleader. The boat was brought up to the city in a waggon at the time the party was undergoing an examination; and the sagacity of Don Miguel Seravia soon elicited the whole truth, even to the cause of the death of their companion, the circumstances of which they vainly tried to conceal.

By the favour of the Bishop they were, after a month's confinement, released, but ordered not to quit the country. They had become Catholics, the good Archbishop standing godfather to the greater part of these precious neophytes, who were now variously employed in the city and neighbourhood. The one who narrated the story was a native of Whitehaven, tolerably well educated, and he seemed deeply to deplore some unfortunate circumstances which had brought him in connection with the Patriot frigate, the crew of which, he repeatedly assured me, could, at the time he landed, have sacked or destroyed the city with ease, because most of the Royalist forces had been despatched towards Panama and Lima, and the arms of the militia, who were chiefly Creoles of

the country, and not to be depended on, being deposited in the Cathedral.

Early next morning after my arrival, I was ordered to wait on the Governor, with whom I found the Archbishop and "Don Allemagne," as the Spaniards called him, a merchant of Bremen or Hamburgh, who had been some years resident here. The Governor had now the *finesse* to conceal his knowledge of the English language, and the German acted as interpreter. I was particularly questioned regarding the force and intentions of the Patriot cruisers, &c. in the Charibbeian Sea; but, pleading ignorance on that subject, I was examined regarding the intercourse between the Indians and English, and whether I knew of any communication by water from the Lake of Nicaragua to the Atlantic, otherwise than by the River San Juan. The Governor having, as he thought, elicited all the information on these subjects in my power to give him, told me I should leave Leon in three days, that in the meantime I might walk about the city; but he refused the request of the German who wished me to remove to his house, and also my request to remain a few days longer, observing, that if my health was bad, I would be better in the country than in town, and that I might remain with my friend the Cura of Monagua a month if I wished it; that four reals a day would be allowed for my travelling expenses, and that Don Juan Blanco, should have orders to return as much of my property as could be discovered on my arrival at San Carlos; but that my small vessel would be condemned. His Excellency expressed regret that I had experienced so much an-

noyance, observing, that, under all circumstances, the Commandant at the harbour of San Juan would have been perfectly justified, by the appearances against me, if he had put me to death.

On gaining the street, I expressed my thanks to the German for his kindness, and promised to visit him;—he observed, that I might consider myself fortunate in being so soon allowed to leave the country, that a resolution was hourly expected to take place, which, added to my having assisted in defence of the vessels at San Juan, was the sole cause of my having received permission to depart. He cautioned me against evincing too much curiosity in the city, and, above all, to avoid the society of the English deserters. His house was a large building, surrounded by a square or quadra of warehouses, the under part nearly filled with bales of cocoa, indigo, cochineal, sarsaparilla, pearl oyster shells, or mother of pearl, tortoise-shell, barks, gums, and various other articles, with some European goods. He said he had been established in the country nearly eight years, and had made voyages to Manilla, China, and Bengal; that he had returned, only a few months ago, from a voyage to Europe:—that he had now a ship in the harbour of Realejo, which the Independents had attempted to cut out, but were beat off by the forts and gun-boats, on which account the Government had demanded forty thousand dollars, as salvage for part of the cargo then on board, and locked up the greater part of the goods in security for the payment, so that he was forced to take his goods from the public stores by degrees as he made sales:—that he did not consider his property safe in the present state of the country, and

meant to leave it, so soon as he could complete his vessel's cargo.

I examined a large quantity of tortoise-shell which he had bought at 12 reals: most of it was light, cloudy, and of indifferent quality; although there was also some fine transparent and heavy shells. The best pieces had evidently been picked out. I found him busily employed receiving a quantity of cocoa, which had arrived from Massaya on the backs of above eighty mules: it was re-weighed and examined with great care: the quality was excellent. I assisted in the selection and arrangement of upwards of forty cases, each containing about one hundred weight of tortoise-shell. The quality of the parcel, as a whole, had been deteriorated not only by the abstraction of the finest parts, but also by the addition of the *shorters* —small worthless pieces that form the sides of the turtle, but I have no doubt, if judiciously arranged, it would be equal to that of the West Indies. My friend showed me also several casks of mother-of-pearl shell, in the selection of which he had been much puzzled; the Indians paying no attention in collecting it, but bringing cloudy, carious, and worm-eaten pieces, mixed with the largest and most beautiful sorts. Many of these were brought from the Gulfs of Fonseca and Necoya, and he paid for most of these things in European goods, on which he had an enormous profit.

I retired to the Cuartel early in the evening, where I found the English sailor waiting to solicit my interest with the Governor, to be allowed to quit the country; but I could only serve him by giving him such information as enabled him afterwards to sail with my German friend from Realejo.

In the evening the German accompanied me in a walk through the city. It covers a good deal of ground, and is, on the whole, handsome;—many of the streets are broad, and intersect each other at right angles. The houses are large, but none exceed two stories;—the fronts in general white washed, and the lower windows secured by bars of wrought iron, or ornamented gratings, which, with the shutters and lattices—the upper ones painted a light green—have a cool and pleasant appearance. Most of the houses are entered by a large gate leading into the court-yard or quadra, round which are the warehouses or store-rooms of the merchants, the apartments of the domestics, the stables, and other offices. Usually a piazza or portico runs round the court, affording a complete shelter from the sun and rain. The centre is enlivened with a few trees, shrubs and flowers, or, in some instances, there is a fountain or reservoir of water. The roofs are in general flat and overhang the footpaths, which are clean, and paved with large pebbles. The city and suburbs, according to the estimate of my friend, contain about three thousand houses; and the number of inhabitants, including Indians, is more than fourteen thousand. Being the residence of the Governor and a bishop's see, it is second in wealth and population to Guatémala alone. I observed eight churches, exclusive of the Cathedral, and several monasteries and nunneries. The markets are abundantly supplied with beef, pork, fish and fowls; and all the varieties of fruit and vegetables produced in a tropical climate, or even in the more temperate regions. The climate is considered delightful, although occasionally visited by tempests and heavy rains. The general

mode of living is luxurious. My allowance from the Government was four reales, or half a dollar per day, which was a great deal more than sufficient to enable me to live, in every respect, like the officers in the Cuartel, whose daily provision was as follows:—Shortly after daybreak half a pint of excellent chocolate or strong coffee, with a slice or two of bread; about nine o'clock a breakfast of fish, flesh, or fowl, and sometimes all these; to which was added an omelet, tortillas, and excellent wheaten bread, with claret or agua-ardiente:—about noon a soup composed of boiled beef and vegetables, and a saucer of sweetmeats, for those who chose them, ushered in a dinner consisting of the same materials as the breakfast, after which a cup of strong coffee prepares them for their siesta or afternoon's sleep, to which all then retired, the city, from that period until about four in the evening, being as quiet as at midnight. About nine supper was served,—thus ending the day, the principal business of which seemed to be eating, drinking, smoking and sleeping. The meanest persons smoke tobacco, although it is the dearest article in the place. I had no opportunity of seeing the public walk, which I was told was a very pleasant place, situated at the north-west entrance to the city, and much frequented in the cool of the evening by all classes.

On the fourth morning from my arrival, I again received orders to attend the Governor, who desired me to prepare to depart for Granada the following day, under the same escort; but, that I was not now to consider myself a prisoner, and might take my own time in travelling. His Excellency accompanied his instructions by a present of two

doubloons. Expressing my thanks for his prompt justice and urbanity, I withdrew, gratefully impressed by his kindness and liberality. My German friend, who was to set off that evening for Realejo, also presented me with a little money, and an additional quantity of linen,—observing, that these articles were absolutely necessary to every traveller, more especially to an Englishman, who could not journey comfortably, unless accompanied by cleanliness and independence. This worthy man also gave me a letter to his correspondent at Granada; and others to be forwarded, by way of Jamaica, to Europe.

I found the sergeant at the Cuartel waiting for me; that he had received his final instructions, and was desirous of leaving Leon in the morning before daylight, on purpose to arrive early at Pueblo Nueva. I furnished him with the means of providing such things for the journey as he considered necessary for our comfort. By allowing me to ride in advance of the party, when about to pass other travellers on the road, he saved me from much interruption and many annoying questions,—was very attentive to my wants, and studied my comfort, both on the way to and from Leon, as much as circumstances would allow.

CHAPTER XI.

DEPARTURE FROM LEON—GAME, &c.—PUEBLO NUEVO—MONAGUA—POLITICAL STATE OF THE COUNTRY—KINDNESS OF INYGOYEN—RECROSS THE LAVA—EFFECTS OF THE ERUPTION—MASSAYA—COLONEL SACASSA—MEDICINE—INDIAN PROCESSION — MISSIONARIES — ARRIVAL AT GRANADA—LAKE AND ADJACENT COUNTRY—EARTHQUAKES—EXACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT—ABUNDANCE OF PROVISIONS—VOYAGE TO SAN CARLOS, &c.

EVERY thing being arranged for our departure from Leon, the sergeant brought me an excellent horse, and we started before day-break. We soon overtook the soldiers who had preceded us on foot, the Governor's orders being, that, as "Don Orlando" was to travel slowly, horses or mules were not necessary for the escort. I promised to remount them at the next halting places, and they exerted themselves to keep up with us.

The sergeant had provided a small fowling-piece, in lieu of the carabine he formerly carried, but he soon showed me that he was no sportsman;

he fired at three guams, each as large as a turkey-cock, but they merely hopped to another branch. Watching until their heads were close together, I brought the whole three to the ground at one shot, telling the sergeant that was the way the Patriots and Indians generally used their fire-arms. He crossed himself, and expressed much surprise. None of the wild deer came within reach of small shot, but we got more game of other kinds than we could carry, and a few Indian marksmen could, in these woods, find daily provisions for a regiment of men. We arrived at Pueblo Nueva about nine o'clock, and I hung my hammock in my old quarters, while the sergeant went to the Indian alcalde to whom we presented the game, and, in return, received an excellent breakfast. Our soldiers went in search of mules; but the poor people being, in general, obliged to furnish the troops gratuitously, none could be found, until it was known that the use of them would be paid for:—the three cost only six reales, or three quarters of a dollar, to Nagarotta, at which place we arrived safely in the evening.

Wishing to arrive at Managua as early as possible, we were on the road long before daybreak;—we arrived in good time at Matares—and next morning, by six o'clock, recrossed the high ground, from whence we again had a most beautiful prospect of the country, and adjoining lake. My good friend the cura was from home, but his family received me with the greatest kindness and attention; refreshments were set before me, and when he arrived, he embraced and welcomed me with all the warmth of an old friend, expressing himself

much satisfied with the manner in which I had been received in Leon.

At supper we had much conversation regarding the political state of the country; and although the cura expressed himself cautiously, it was evident he contemplated with pleasure, the change progressively taking place. Some of his friends having called to inquire for him, readily joined in our conversation; and, over a bowl of punch, a liquor I taught him to compound, reserve was soon banished from his convivial board; he observed, that he hoped the day was not far distant when Managua, and the Interior of Central America, would be better known to my countrymen, and every one seemed to speak freely of the state of the country, deplored the commercial and other restrictions under which they laboured; and it was evident that the worthy cura, who is a native Creole, and his friends, wished well to the cause of independence, and anticipated a great, and certain change in the political government of Central America. I ventured to explain, that although for some time I had confined my exertions entirely to commercial pursuits, I once commanded a vessel in the service of the Independents, and wished well to their cause. Some of the gentlemen present expressed their hopes, that the trade would soon be more open; that British goods of almost every description were much wanted; that the towns in the vicinity of the Lakes of Nicaragua and Leon could consume and pay for a very large quantity; and that, by perseverance, I might then avail myself of the knowledge I had acquired, to recover more than I had at present lost. The party broke

up about ten o'clock. In the evening I joined him in a ride through the town, which is pleasantly situated in a romantic vale on the borders of the Lake. The streets are wide, and intersect each other at right angles, forming squares of buildings similar to those of Leon. It contains six churches; that of my conductor, and one or two others are large, and handsome,—the houses are in general two stories high, flat roofed, built of sun-dried bricks, and white washed; they were, in comfort and arrangement, similar to the houses of Leon and Granada. I observed shops for the sale of wine, agua-ardiente, and other liquors. Bread, cheese of the country, *dulces*, or sweet meats, coffee, and coarse brown sugar, were sold in almost every small house of the Indians. I found that my friend had to act the part of a magistrate as well as priest; for on our return, an Indian and his wife came to state some grievance which they had suffered from a neighbour of the cura, who immediately sent for the accused; and, inquiring into the facts, admonished him to redress the injury, which he faithfully promised; and I was much pleased to observe the respectful deference paid to his advice and admonitions, by both parties. As he had occasion to visit Granada in two days, after a day or two farther sojourn, I took my leave, upon a promise that I should be his guest at Granada, where he had also a residence. We commenced our journey at the usual hour, three in the morning, and by six we once more crossed the stratum of lava formerly mentioned, so that I had an opportunity of confirming my former observation of its course. The neighbourhood of the high ridge over which we crossed, as also the low ground,

presented evident appearances of the destructive effects of this eruption, — being covered with an entire mass of scoria, pumice, and detached rocks, of several tons weight. The volcano does not appear to be so elevated as those of Granada and Cartago. We spent so much time in viewing the effects of the eruption, and the beautiful appearance of the lakes and the adjoining country, that we did not reach Massaya until late in the day. I was waited upon by the son of Colonel Sacassa, with an invitation to breakfast. This young gentleman, to whom I was indebted for the present of clothes and linen, when unwell, on my way to Leon, mentioned that his father was confined to his apartment, by severe indisposition; and, as he understood every Englishman knew something of medicine, entreated I would prescribe for him. The Colonel's house was a handsome building, opposite to the principal church; which, with the monastery, and Cuartel, or *place d'armes*, formed one side of the square. I found the old gentleman in a dark, close, pent-up room, on the ground floor, in an English tent-bed, with thick cotton curtains, surrounded by every precaution to exclude the fresh air. When he held out his hand to welcome me, I found he was in a high fever: he lamented there was no medical advice to be had nearer than Granada, and complained of violent headach, and great pain in the back and loins. I advised him to lose not a moment in getting removed to an open and airy apartment; take aperient medicines; and get blood drawn:—and, if next day he was no better, to have a blister applied to his stomach; get his body rubbed with the pods of Cayenne pepper;

use the warm bath; and take spruce beer, or a beverage of lime-juice, water and sugar, seasoned with Cayenne pepper, to quench his thirst. It was with great difficulty I could persuade him of the utility and necessity of a free circulation of air, but by the following day he felt great relief.

His son, who was educating for the church, pressed me to spend the day with him. We walked about the town, which is smaller than Managua, but built nearly in the same manner,—pleasantly situated in a fertile valley, surrounded by plantations of cocoa, plantains, and vast enclosures of Indian corn. The detached group of mountains, amongst which is the "*Volcan de Grantida,*" rise in majestic grandeur above the hills to the westward.

During our walk, we met a number of Indians going in procession to a church. Before them was borne a huge crucifix, and an image, made of wood, which, I was told, was the representation of some idol they had formerly worshipped, which they were now going to deposit in the church. These neophytes had been formed into a settlement in the vicinity, under the direction of some Catholic missionaries, who resided with them, and who were endeavouring to bring them to peaceful and industrious habits.

I remained at the Colonel's house that evening, and at my departure in the morning, received a letter specially recommending me to his son, the acting Governor of Granada. After a very pleasant ride, the sergeant and I arrived in the suburbs of that city, where he halted to breakfast, and wait the arrival of the soldiers, who travelled this last stage on foot.

The whole distance by the route we travelled to and from Leon, as stated in the preceding account, may be computed at about one hundred and fourteen miles; and from Leon to the Pacific is, as I was assured, and have the best reason to state, not above six miles. I was told our route to Leon was not the most direct; but, from the appearance of the country, and leading direction of the road, I am confident the difference cannot be greater than a few miles. We proceeded to the Governor's house, where, after reading his brother's letter, Don Cresantia Sacassa congratulated me on my safe return; but informed me, that it was Don Miguel's instructions, that I should take up my abode at one of the Cuartels, out of which I was on no account to sleep; but that in the day time I should be at liberty to go where I chose. That unless I could obtain a passage in one of the merchant bongos going to San Juan, with a cargo for the two schooners, I would have to proceed to San Carlos in the government boat, sailing on the first day of every month. I expressed myself satisfied with these arrangements, and took possession of a room at the barracks, by fixing up my hammock, and obtaining other accommodation necessary for my comfort.

The city of Granada is said to have been founded by Francisco Fernandez de Cordova about three hundred years ago. The population, including European Spaniards, Creoles, Mestizoes and pure Indians, cannot be estimated much lower than that of Leon. The principal public buildings, including the sumptuous parochial church, and the one dedicated to the Lady of Guadaloupe in the grand

square, with others of minor importance, are, the Franciscan convent; one of San Juan de Dios, with an hospital attached to it; another of La Merced; and three other convents, besides the barracks or cuartel in the parade. The situation of this city between the lakes, and its central position in respect to the Atlantic and Pacific, afford great facilities for making it the depôt for the greatest commerce in South America, or perhaps in the world. It is well built; one side of the great square is chiefly formed by the principal church; a large monastery and a convent make up the greater part of another side; the guard-house, and soldiers barracks, a third; and the principal shops in the town, front the church, and complete the square. The streets are for the most part wide, and paved with stone; and, in some places, the footpaths are raised two feet above the level of the streets, and sheltered by the balconies and projecting roofs of the houses. Many of the houses are three stories high, and, as the streets intersect each other, form squares of buildings, the longest sides of which extend from east to west. The town stands on a gently rising ground, which contributes much to its cleanliness; and the principal streets are terminated by views of the hills in the neighbourhood, or mountains in the distance. The cross streets are narrower, but the houses in general are, like those of Leon, large, handsome, and convenient; the apartments lofty, and better furnished than is usual in Spanish towns. Granada is said to be celebrated for its cabinet ware, the workmen possessing many beautiful kinds of wood. They are obliged, however, to work with very inferior tools,—good edge-tools

being much wanted. One of the most valuable pieces of furniture in the family room is generally a crucifix, and an image of the virgin and child, in a case, richly ornamented, and illuminated at night. There is a great variety of shops, for the sale of small wares, but no indications of a full supply of any thing like valuable goods. In the principal warehouses nothing was exposed in the windows, or otherwise; every thing appeared private, and concealed, and the depositories were not thrown open as at the Havannah, Buenos Ayres, and Lima. I was given to understand that the principal trade was entirely in the hands of a few old Spaniards, natives for the most part of Catalonia and Biscay, who contrived to have the offer of every cargo that arrived at San Juan; and their transactions were managed with such secrecy, as to preclude all chance of competition:—the native Creoles seldom or never receiving any notice of an arrival, until they saw the goods going into the warehouses, which, in appearance, almost resemble prisons, but are well stocked with the most valuable productions of the country, such as indigo, cochineal, sarsaparilla, cocoa, hides, barks, &c. The greater part of the retail trade of the place is, on market and holidays, carried on by the Creoles and other natives of the country, whose shops, as I before observed, are numerous; the commodities they vend, consist of a small assortment of dry goods and earthenware:—others, the places called pulperias, resemble the hucksters shops in England; and, in these places are sold bread, cheese, agua-ardiente, pottery, glass, sugar, sweetmeats, oil, and a variety of small wares; which are also vended by people in the public square, much in

the manner of our travelling Jews and pedlars. The place seems poorly supplied with medicines, and the priest generally administers to both soul and body. Close to the lake there is a pleasant promenade, much frequented in the evening by the principal inhabitants; it commands a delightful prospect of the lake, and of the hattos in the neighbourhood. In the course of my morning ablations, I noticed a visible difference in the height of the waters of the lake. I cannot undertake to affirm that it had a *regular* ebb and flow; and believe the circumstance is owing to the influence of regular morning and evening breezes, impelling the waters of the lake in certain directions at particular periods of the day and night; and with greater force at some times than at others. The Strand is generally covered by daybreak with linen. I have often seen one or two hundred women and girls washing clothes in the morning, so that whether in the evening, or morning, a walk to the lake is a cheerful recreation. Near the Playa, or Embarcadero, some enterprising individuals had undertaken to build a vessel, which, from the appearance of the frame laying on the spot, I should suppose to have been intended to carry fifty or sixty tons. When she was nearly finished it was discovered that the ground had sunk, so as to cause a rise, between the slip and the lake. The ground had afterwards been levelled, and every exertion made to launch the vessel; but, so ignorant were they of the use of mechanical powers, that, after several fruitless attempts, they were obliged to take the vessel to pieces.

The markets, at Granada, are abundantly supplied with beef, pork, poultry, cheese, butter, and

milk from the farms in the neighbourhood, at a very reasonable rate; and with a great variety of excellent fish, and water-fowl from the lake.

The neighbouring country and forests furnish game in abundance; wheat-flour is brought from Guatemala, and the northern provinces; but the bread, used in general by the poor and middling classes, is made of Indian corn, which is also preferred by many of the gentry. The common method of preparing it is by making it into small cakes, called Tortillas;—the grain is first put into a large earthen vessel containing a strong lye of wood ashes, or lime and water, to soften it and take off the husk; it is then put upon a stone made concave for the purpose, and bruised with a small stone roller, held firmly with both hands, and rolled backwards, and forwards, until the corn is bruised to a fine paste; it is then shaped into round flat cakes, and baked on an earthen pan, or flat iron plate; the young women show great cleanliness and activity in preparing it, and, when well toasted, it will keep good for many months.

The kinds of fish caught in the lake, in the immediate vicinity, are, the carvalhoe or carvally, tarpoin, snook, sturgeon, rock-fish, carp, mullet, barbel, perch, red and yellow snapper, calapaver, pike, grooper, and various others;—one of them said to be a species of shark. Immense numbers of wild-fowl resort to its waters, amongst these are the large and small Muscovy duck; the red and black-legged widgeon; teal; and many others. Snipe and curlew in great numbers frequent the islands, and low savannahs, on the borders of the lake; and, being seldom molested, will suffer even the large bongos to approach so near, that they

may be knocked down with a stick. Widgeon and teal are so numerous, that they at times appear, when on the wing, to darken the air like a cloud. The terrapin, and hiccatee or river-turtle, are also very numerous; and are to be met with near all the islands, and creeks;—as also are shrimps, and a very large species of cray-fish. Although the temperature of Nicaragua is too warm for wheat, it yields, most bountifully, all the other articles appertaining to the climate, such as cocoa, indigo, cochineal, cotton, and various medicinal drugs, barks, and gums; besides, grapes, and other delicious fruits:—the forests abound in the most valuable timber; and various rare plants, birds and animals, afford ample scope for the researches of the naturalist.

Granada is sometimes subject to earthquakes: a slight shock was felt during my stay there. The day on the evening of which it took place was very close and sultry, without a breath of wind. I was in one of the small shops, the master of which generally supplied the officers' mess at the Cuartel: and, resting myself at the moment in a hammock, smoking a cigar, and talking with the man's daughter; although I did not feel any motion of the earth, my attention was suddenly roused by a burst of apprehension from all present. Some threw themselves on their knees; others hastened to illuminate the image of the Virgin, and, on reaching the street, the whole population was hurrying to the churches; the greatest anxiety and alarm depicted on every countenance:—many had formed themselves into processions, headed by their clergy; some bore lighted tapers, crucifixes, and other insignia of the Catholic faith; the *Miserere*

was chanted in every street; and "Santa Maria," and "misero mio" issued from every mouth. I pitied people hurrying to places, in which, if the shocks had been violent, they must have been overwhelmed with inevitable destruction; but the shocks gradually became less, and I have frequently felt them more severe during my residence in tropical climates. The whole night was spent in illuminations, prayers, and processions, and no material damage was occasioned. My friend the Cura of Monagua, who had been some time in Granada, asked me, on joining him and his family next morning, at the breakfast-table, in which of the churches I had taken refuge during the awful threatening? I ventured to express my disapprobation of that custom, and explained my reasons for preferring the shelter afforded by one of the small houses, the walls of which being of hardened clay, little danger could be apprehended, unless the earth opened; and that, certainly, the spot unincumbered by buildings was, in such circumstances, the safest for an assembly of the clergy and people to propitiate the omnipresent Almighty; and that, on the other hand, to trust themselves in their heavy Gothic churches, appeared to be little better than tempting Providence. He observed, that there was some reason in my remarks; but, that he considered it his duty to be there, even if he knew it was likely to be his destruction; and that, in the day of calamity, it became him to be at his post, in the midst of his people. The more I knew of this worthy man, the more cause I had to admire him: so far from pressing me on the articles of my faith, or seeking me to change from the tenets of the Protestant religion, he never for one

moment gave me cause to doubt his universal benevolence.

On calling next day at the Governor's, I found him and all his household, assorting a large quantity of cocoa and indigo, which had that morning arrived from Nicaragua; and they appeared too busy to think any thing of the recent earthquake. The principal people consider it no degradation to be employed in the meanest offices of trade. The produce of a farm, for instance cheese, butter and milk, were retailed under the immediate superintendance of the Governor's lady; who, also, sold coarse cheeks, and some other articles, the manufacture of the country. The Governor was superintendant of the customs, and revenue; passports were requisite for persons travelling a distance of thirty miles; clearances were necessary for bongos crossing the lake; all public business was transacted at the Governor's house; every means seem to have been devised, by the Government, to keep the trade of the country in its grasp; and to extort money from the people by every possible method. All those in power were natives of old Spain, and there seemed to be little cordiality between them and the majority of the natives.

I availed myself of the facilities afforded by the letter of recommendation, from Leon, to become acquainted with the nature of the trade of Granada, and the province generally.

The articles in the greatest request, and which find a ready sale in Guatemala, Comoyagua, Leon, Granada, Nicaragua, Cartago, and in the Central States generally, are noted in the Appendix. *

* See Note V.

Most of the articles there enumerated, are such as I have found answer on the Mosquito Shore and also on the shores of the Pacific, when engaged in the free trade.

There seems no doubt that my detention in Granada was to give the schooners Flor del Mer, and Estrella, time to receive their cargoes and proceed to sea, before I should be able to leave the coast, or be in a situation to communicate with any of the Independent cruizers. The cargoes consisted of the choicest productions of the country, collected and sent down in bongos, and these schooners, with their cargoes, would have made the fortune of any cruiser who might have captured them. Contrary to the Governor's promise, I was not allowed to proceed in the bongo which sailed on the first day of the month;—that boat was accompanied by others, having on board goods to complete the cargoes above named. About eight days afterwards I had a final interview with the Governor, who furnished me with the means of laying in provisions; and, I obtained a passage in one of these bongos, belonging to traders or retlers, who cross the lake to San Carlos with groceries, liquors, tobacco, &c. at the time the soldiers there, and on the river San Juan, are receiving their pay. These people open a temporary store for the sale of their commodities, and generally realize a profit upon cocoa, coffee, &c. of one hundred to one hundred and fifty per cent.

From the worthy Cura of Monagua and my other friends in Granada, I had continued to receive the kindest attentions and demonstrations of regard. After bidding them adieu, I left Granada in

the boat mentioned, with two men and a woman, the joint owners, a padrone, and a crew of twelve Indians.

We commenced the voyage about twelve o'clock, pulling for the islands called Las Blitas, where we arrived in the evening, and slept. These islands are composed of vast masses of rock, upon some of which there is much good soil covered with fruit-trees and others, of various descriptions, much frequented by the guam, currassow, bill bird, coquiricot, &c. on account of the hog plum, sapodilla, mamee, and other fruit, growing upon them. The water is here clear and deep, containing abundance of fish. Between these islets and Granada, there is a small bay, said to be infested by water-snakes of the most venomous description, and on that account, little frequented.

We left Las Blitas early in the morning; and, making sail with a light breeze across the lake, reached the small islands, close to the main, in the evening. We continued next day to coast along the shore, always going ashore on the mainland, or on some of the islands, to cook our victuals. The water about these islands, at a distance from the main, is clear and deep, with a rocky bottom, the islands, as already stated, being surrounded with large masses of stone. Others close to the shore are, however, flat, and some of them are inhabited by a few families of Indians, whose principal occupation is fishing and cultivating small patches of Indian corn. The shore, towards the eastern side of the lake, is in general flat; and has, in most places, a muddy bottom, for upon the wind blowing strongly, the water became much discoloured, and we were then oblig-

ed to take shelter on the leeside of one of the islands, or to run the bongo into some creek on the main. Any elevation in this quarter is still however composed of rocks. At several of the farms we procured dried beef, and cheese, and at one place, a bullock, for which the padrone paid seven dollars, the common price being from eight to ten dollars. On the evening of the sixth day we landed at San Carlos. Immediately I waited on the Governor, who now received me politely, and mentioned that he had recovered some of the goods which had been plundered from my little vessel; that these would be returned to me, and that my Indians were well, but that he had been obliged to keep four of them confined, to prevent their escaping, but that one was allowed to be at liberty, in succession, to provide additional comforts for his companions. Brown came to me overjoyed at my safety; but loudly complained that the Governor, and Salablanca, who had been prosecuted on account of the action with the Centinels, had used every means to induce them to criminate me as a spy for the Patriots, offering to give them clothes, send them safe home with presents, &c., but all to no purpose. Finding these efforts of no avail, they were then confined to the castle, as already mentioned, and compelled to perform menial services for the officers. They were allowed only half rations, and the remainder of their subsistence was procured by the labour, or solicitations, of the one at liberty in the village—a line of conduct, than which none could have been better adapted to keep up their enmity to the Spanish name. Some of the Spaniards may have since suffered for it,—they were now allowed their liberty, with

half a real a day for subsistence. I gave them money, supplied Brown with a good suit of clothes, and each of the others with a new shirt and trowsers; bargaining with the woman who crossed the lake with me, for their provisions. This conduct seemed to surprise the Spaniards, who were not at all aware of the genuine worth of these men. They had been repeatedly told that I had been again tried as a spy, found guilty, executed at Leon, and quartered; and, till they heard from some of the Indian boatmen of my return to Granada, they had given up all hope of ever seeing "Robert," and were meditating how to make their escape. Still their fidelity to me had remained incorruptible; and they now felt indignant at the impositions which had been attempted—saying frequently, "very bad lie," "no good fashion," and using similar expressions.

Salablanca, the old commandant of the battery, seeing the turn my affairs had taken, now offered to render me all the assistance in his power to make my residence at San Carlos agreeable, and, my passage down the river as comfortable as possible; giving me also an invitation to reside at his quarters. The ladies of the Governor's family seemed glad I had returned in safety, and showed me great attention and kindness.

I received, from the Governor, about three dozen of moscheats which he had recovered; with a small quantity of dry goods; and I was permitted to dispose of them in the village. The moscheats cost me about forty-five shillings per dozen, and I sold them at from two to three dollars each; the other goods produced me about one hundred dollars. On finishing this business I be-

gan to prepare for my departure, by providing a sufficient stock of provisions, chocolate, rum, &c. for myself and my Indians; two bongos with supplies of provisions, and a reinforcement of men for the defence of the river, being ordered shortly to proceed.

CHAPTER XII.

GUATEMALA — NICARAGUA — INDIANS — POPULATION — HOSTILE TRIBES — LAKE OF NICARAGUA — SPANISH POSTS — ROUTE BY BLUEFIELD'S RIVER — JOURNEY OF PATTERSON — ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC CANAL — NECESSITY OF FOREIGN LABOURERS — UNITED STATES CONTRACT FOR CUTTING A CANAL — GOLD MINES — PASSAGE DOWN THE SAN JUAN — MOSQUITO KING'S LETTER — INDIAN DARING PLAN OF REVENGE — ARRIVAL AT PRINZAPULKO — JOY OF THE INDIANS.

PONSETT, in his "Notes on Mexico" remarks, that Guatemala extends from about 81° 45′ of west longitude, to 94°, and from 8° to 17° north latitude. It is bounded on the west by the Intendancy of Oaxaca in Mexico; on the N. W. by Yucatour; on the S. E. by the Province of Veragua in Santa Fé de Bogota; on the south and southwest by the Pacific; and on the north by the Atlantic Ocean. The distance by land from Chillilo, the frontier of Oaxaca, to Chiriqui and Veragua, is seven hundred leagues; and the distance from sea to sea, in no

place exceeds one hundred and eighty leagues, nor falls short of sixty. Of the fifteen provinces into which it is divided, five are situated on the Pacific, five on the Atlantic, and five in the Interior.

The Province of Nicaragua, in 1823, was supposed to contain a population of 164,374. The district of Leon, besides the capital of the same name, contains the cities of Granada, and New Segovia; and the towns of Nicaragua, Esteli, Alcoyapa, Villa Nueva and Massaya; to which may be added Monagua, Matares, Nagarotta, and others of less note.

The province of Costa Rica, the most eastern on the Atlantic side, was, at the same time, estimated to contain a population of 37,716. Between Nicaragua and Comayagua are the provinces of Taguzagalpa, Tologalpa, and Matagalpa, peopled by Indians who have not been converted to the Christian religion, and who may be considered entirely independent of the Spaniards, with whom they hold no intercourse. They are called indiscriminately Xicagues, Moscoes, and Samboes. There are also several other tribes inhabiting the country to the eastward and north-westward of the Lakes of Nicaragua and Monagua or Leon. Among which may be reckoned the Valientes or *Indios Bravos*, the Chilibees, Tiribees, Woolwas, Ramas, Cookras, Poyers and various others, who have zealously maintained their liberty, and amongst whom the Spaniards have not been able to establish themselves. All these tribes are favourable to the British, and took the opportunity, on most occasions, of joining the Buccaniers, in their predatory excursions against the Spanish posses-

sions, particularly New Segovia, Realejo, Leon, Granada, and Nicaragua, with other towns near their territories—which they repeatedly plundered, and sometimes burnt. A natural barrier of mountains on each side of the lake seems to be the boundary which separates these tribes from the Spaniards. It is difficult to ascertain the total number of each class—but the whole Indian population of Central America has been estimated at from eighteen hundred thousand to a million of souls.

A great proportion of these Indians are still hostile to the Spaniards, and they consider the descendants of the Spaniards born in the New States as such; were they properly united, under one head, and their efforts combined, they are capable of giving serious annoyance to the new government of Central America.

Inarras, * whom I have already quoted, says that the Lake of Nicaragua is "more than one hundred and eighty miles long, and nearly one hundred broad; having almost every where ten fathoms water, with a muddy bottom, except along the shore, where there is a clear bottom, with an inexhaustible number of fine fish; it is rendered extremely picturesque by the numerous small islands with which the surface is studded." His knowledge, however, both of the dimensions of the lake, and of the rivers that empty themselves into it, is extremely limited; and a mere reference to the chart, which accompanies his work, will convince the most casual observer, that it is full of the grossest errors; in speaking of the "fortification" on the river San Juan, he

* History of Guatemala. London, 1823.

seems to have been quite ignorant on the subject, and leaves it in doubt whether he means San Carlos, the beaten down castle of San Juan, or the battery at the harbour. My tedious voyage of six days along the shores of the lake, gave me an opportunity of landing in several places; the land, as I have before stated, is in general low, and composed of luxúriant savannahs, but rises gradually in the interior. Except near the village of San Miguel, I did not perceive any river or considerable stream falling into the lake. My companions mentioned the names of several streams, but did not seem to be aware of any considerable river. San Miguel has some defences, doubtless, from fear of the incursions of the Mosquito and other Indians; and it is at this point that I suspect the easiest communication with Bluefields River may be found. The Spaniards have also a small post or guard a few miles to the southward of San Miguel, at about thirty miles from San Carlos, and there is a similar post within seven or eight miles of the castle, in a situation low, but commanding a good view of the coast towards San Miguel and Trinidad.

I have already, in a former chapter, hinted at the great probability of an easy communication between the Lake of Nicaragua, and the Atlantic, by way of Bluefields River; and as my attention had been forcibly drawn to that circumstance by the special manner in which I was questioned on that subject, by the Governor of Leon, I had become very desirous of learning something of the particulars of a visit which, I had heard, was paid to that city about twenty-five or thirty years ago, by a person named Patterson, in search of some

male and female runaway negroes. I had heard that one of them, a girl at that time, was still in Granada, and had become the wife of the English negro soldier—one of my conductors to and from Leon, and I went to her house for the purpose of ascertaining the foundation of the story. She told me that she was the daughter of one of the negroes belonging to Colonel Hodgson at Bluefields;—that, when a girl, she had joined a party who had run away from the British settlers at Pearl Kay Lagoon; that they went up Bluefields River, until they arrived at a stream whose course they followed for a short distance, and then passing through a pine ridge of no great extent, and crossing a savannah, they, in a few hours after leaving Bluefields River, arrived on the borders of the lake along which they walked, and shortly came to the town or village of Trinidad. They were kindly received by the authorities of the place, and sent to Granada. Their owners having heard of the route they had taken, drew up a memorial to the Spanish government and intrusted it to Mr Patterson, who, following the negroes, found his way across the savannahs to the lake, and from thence to the city of Granada, where he presented his memorial demanding restitution of the slaves.

The Spanish authorities were surprised at his appearance by this unusual route; but as the men had professed themselves converts to the Catholic religion, and been taken into the Spanish service, the authorities declined delivering them up, offering, however, to pay Patterson a sum which they considered the value of the negroes; but, having declined to enter into any compromise, and having, in the heat of argument, made use of some

improper expressions regarding the Spanish government, he was placed in confinement, and shortly afterwards sent across the lake, and down the River San Juan to the harbour; from whence, by the help of some Indians, he found his way home. The woman, who now kept a small shop and was laundress to the Governor's family, told me the story of Patterson's disappointment very circumstantially, and with great glee. I consider it of importance to notice this story, because it has given rise to gross misrepresentations regarding the practicability of rendering the river San Juan navigable; and, because it confirms what had been told me by the Woolwa and Cookra Indians, living on the borders of Bluefields River, regarding a route by which goods might be forwarded to the Lake of Nicaragua otherwise than by the River San Juan, and I found persons in Granada who had formerly received goods, in a contraband manner, by this route.

Pitman in his Work on the Practicability of joining the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by a Ship Canal, has the following quotation from Robinson.* "About sixteen years ago an enterprising Englishman, who casually visited the River San Juan, examined the different passages over the bar, and discovered one, which, although narrow, would admit a vessel drawing twenty-five feet." It is needless to say this enterprising Englishman was Patterson; who, so far from having any opportunity of examining "the different passages over the bar," was closely, and jealously, confined until sent out of the country.

* Robinson's Account of General Mina's Expedition.

In perusing the narrative of this voyage and journey, the reader will have attended to many of the natural obstacles which have to be encountered, if it should ever be attempted to form the much wished for communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the River San Juan and the Lakes of Nicaragua and Leon; and the very inaccurate information which has hitherto been received in regard to their magnitude.

These obstacles are undoubtedly much more formidable than any writer on the subject has yet given out; and although they may be overcome by a judicious application of English and American capital, aided by the hearty co-operation of the Central States, the United States, and the Government of Colombia; it is evident that the associations hitherto formed in England, and elsewhere, are totally inadequate to the end proposed; and that they possess neither the capital, information, nor influence, requisite for even making the attempt in this quarter with the slightest chance of success. Admitting that the principal impediment is to be found in the Rio San Juan itself, and from the erroneous accounts propagated by the elegant historian of the West Indies * and others, hitherto reckoned the easiest part of the undertaking, it must be evident that, taking every advantage of the deep parts of the river, numerous locks and cuts will require to be carried along the banks of the river to overcome the shallows and rapids in its course. The harbour is undoubtedly admirably calculated for an entrance to the canal, and there would not, I ap-

* Bryan Edwards.

prehend, be any great difficulty in deepening the bar, and making the river itself navigable, for large ships, as far as Serapiqui; but, at a very short distance above that place, the serious obstacles would begin to be felt; and although it will require works of very considerable magnitude to overcome the principal rapid at the Castle of San Juan, I do not consider these works likely to be either the most difficult or expensive. It is the necessity of overcoming the long shallows in the river, and the consequent extent of the side canals, and the aqueducts necessary for carrying them over streams falling into the river, that will require the greatest labour and expense. From the Lake the stream, forming the commencement of the river, descends over a rocky bottom with considerable rapidity. The fort of the eminence on which Fort San Carlos stands, and round the extreme end of the point that forms the outlet from the Lake, seems composed of solid rock, with, here and there, large detached masses of stone; but, by cutting a channel through the low ground behind the fort, there may perhaps be no great difficulty in constructing a safe entrance from the lake to the river, thereby avoiding all the hazard and difficulty presented by the abrupt nature of its bed, where it issues from the lake; but, I consider the greatest difficulty of all is, *the absolute necessity* which there would be for employing foreign labourers, unaccustomed to the climate, to perform the whole of the *heavy* work on the river; for it must be very obvious, from what I have stated of the nature, habits, and disposition of the Mosquito and other Indians on the coast, that it would be in vain to expect any

efficient assistance from them; because, whatever temptation might be held out in point of wages, they are incapable of any continued effort of hard labour, and it is not at all probable that they would forego the comforts of their present easy and indolent life, to embrace one of severe exertion, more especially to benefit, as they would suppose, their inveterate enemies the Spaniards.

The speculations of Robinson and other writers, in regard to the facility of obtaining native labourers, are perfectly chimerical. If, however, foreign labourers were employed, the Indians, kept in good humour, might procure and furnish, at an easy rate, abundant supplies of provisions.

With regard to materials for the construction of the various locks, &c. there would be at hand abundance of the fine timber, basalt, or whinstone rock; as also brick clay, and perhaps freestone, although I did not perceive any of the latter on my passage up or down the river.

Vessels once in the lake of Nicaragua, would find sufficient depth of water; and, with the occasional assistance of a few steam vessels, would have no difficulty in proceeding from one end to the other.

The obstacles, to be surmounted in forming a communication between the two lakes, are not very formidable. It is probable the natural channel, which, at one time, existed, has only been partially, or for a short distance, filled up; and that a few miles of canal over the narrow isthmus which separates the two lakes, will not be a work of great magnitude; and that no greater difficulty

would present itself, although more locks might be necessary, in opening the communication from Leon down to the South Sea, the distance, as formerly stated, being only a few miles.

The greater part of the work at these two last points might, through the influence of the local authorities, be performed by native labourers; but I am satisfied, the greatest number of native and creole labourers which the Central States could furnish, would be inadequate to the immense labour which would be requisite on the River San Juan.

Perhaps, as I have formerly stated, a still better line of communication between the lake of Nicaragua and the South Sea, may be found across the low land to the westward of the Island of Ometepec, in the Lake, into the Gulf of Papagayo:—The land at that point is undoubtedly neither elevated, nor the distance great. If I may be permitted to hazard another speculative opinion, on a subject so important, it would be on the probability of finding a more eligible communication, between the Lake of Nicaragua and the Atlantic, by Bluefields River, near the route taken by the negroes already mentioned; but I do this with extreme deference, and merely with the intention of indicating a point worthy of being examined.

In the above remarks I have merely been desirous to correct several prevailing errors, which have long existed, regarding the topography of this interesting country: and, in the absence of any scientific guide, to add my mite to the great mass of information lately diffused regarding the New World.

To say any thing regarding the manifold ad-

vantages to be derived from a ship-communication between the two great oceans, is perhaps superfluous, after the volumes already written on the subject. It may be remarked, however, that I have not yet heard of any plan upon a scale sufficiently grand, to insure to the world, all the advantages of an undertaking so worthy the combined exertions of Europe and America. I humbly conceive that, to insure all the advantages of which a ship-communication, on a grand scale, is capable, it can only be executed under the sanction of all the great maritime powers; and, that, to avoid jealousy and interruptions, it must be placed under the control of an inferior state, whose independence should be guaranteed by the joint powers of both Europe and America. Without some such guard against the jarring interests of nations, and the mistaken policy which might be adopted by any powerful people having this canal within their control, its navigation would be constantly liable to interruption, and the immense benefits which ought to accrue from it, would consequently be lost to the world. *

Should it ultimately be determined to follow the line of the Rio San Juan, the persons engaged in the undertaking would be benefited, and might ultimately defray a part of the expense of this gigantic undertaking, by working the gold mines to the right and left of the upper part of the river, near the Lake of Nicaragua. The mine on the north side of the river, which is understood to be exceedingly productive, had, for some time, been abandoned by order, as I was informed, of the

* See Note VI.

government, who were probably afraid its value might become known, and provoke the incursions not only of the Indian tribes, but also of the Independents, whose attempts to penetrate into the country they seemed particularly desirous to guard against.

These on the other side were still in progress of being wrought, although in a private manner. The quantity of gold found at these mines, and in the streams in the neighbourhood, was said to be very considerable, both in grains got by washing, and also in marcasite.* There is no doubt that the whole of this country contains auriferous particles, and that, when skilful mineralogists have free access to its recesses, other mines of an equally, or perhaps of a more valuable description, may be discovered. Having, however, very slender pretensions as a mineralogist or engineer, I merely throw out these hints for the consideration of persons of skill and research; for I am persuaded that, in this enterprising age, the canal question will not be allowed to drop, as it did about one hundred and thirty years ago, but that it will be followed out, and ultimately brought to a happy result.

Before leaving San Carlos, I may notice, as an instance of the quantity of dyewood which could be collected in the country, that upwards of three hundred tons of Brazilleto wood had, for sometime, been lying there, contracted for by an American, who finding its transport down the river inconvenient, and being engaged in a more profita-

* See Note VII.

ble trade, was supposed to have abandoned his bargain, and the Governor was now using it as firewood.

San Carlos has, for years, been made the receptacle or prison for felons, and vagabonds of all descriptions, who are sent from Leon, and the different towns on the lakes. The landing place is round the point at some distance facing the village, and is the only spot clear of large detached rocks. Here the soldiers generally resort for the purpose of fishing, and are seldom unsuccessful.

When I took leave of the Governor, Don Juan Blanco, he gave me a passport addressed to the commanding officer at the harbour of San Juan, authorizing me, as some compensation for my losses, to trade there at any future period: he also informed me that I should be at liberty to proceed from thence to the Mosquito Shore with the first Indian party who touched there, and that, it being now the month of October, I would find some of them returning home from the fishery.

The bongo, in which we embarked, contained provisions for the post at San Juan, and for the garrison of the battery at the harbour: the other bongo carried a reinforcement of twenty men for these places. Our voyage the first evening terminated at the commencement of the shallow place where we had deposited our poles, in coming up the river. Here we made the bongo fast for the night; and on the first appearance of dawn renewed our voyage, keeping generally in the strength of the current, which, in the shallow parts of the river, carried us down with great velocity. In the course of the morning we came to the principal fall, or rapid, at the old fort of San Juan;

and, keeping the centre of the stream, passed it in safety, although at an astonishing rate. Great exertion was required to pull the bongos into the eddy of the current towards the landing place, or portage attached to the fort. We there landed, and disembarked the provisions intended for the place. Early on the following morning we renewed our passage down the river, keeping, as on the preceding day, in the strength of the current; and the waters of the river being now considerably higher than when we ascended, we always found a sufficiency in the middle of the stream, even at the most shallow parts of the river where islands intervened.

We arrived in the evening at Serapiqui, where I found a sergeant and three or four miserable looking fellows now stationed as a guard.

There was no visible current in the Serapiqui branch of the river communicating with the *Rio Colorado*, which branch is wide, and appeared to be of considerable depth.

On the first appearance of daylight, we left this place; and, in the course of the morning, were met by a courier in a despatch-boat from the commandant of the battery at the harbour. He was the bearer of letters from the Mosquito King, written in the Spanish language, to the Governors of San Carlos and Leon; in which were demanded the instant release of Brown and his other subjects, and in case of refusal, he roundly threatened to commence an Indian warfare on all the Spanish settlements bordering on his territory! The same person was also the bearer of letters for myself, acquainting me with the purport of what had been written to the Government—one from

the King himself, and another from my correspondent at Honduras: I was requested by the King to return, as quickly as possible, to Cape Gracias a Dios, from whence he would get me conveyed to the Bay, and I could not but feel pleased with this spirited conduct of his Mosquito Majesty, which Brown explained to the other Indians, and they seemed much pleased that their friends had not forgotten them.

To give an instance of the spirit and disposition of these people, I may here mention, that, prior to our reaching Serapiqui, I had observed Brown to appear very thoughtful, and frequently conversing aside with the other Indians, who now and then eyed the packages in the boat, and also the Padrone and crew, with a peculiar expression. I was convinced the treatment they had experienced, and the loss of a whole season's fishing, had made a deep impression on their minds, and suspected that Brown was concerting some mode of retaliation or revenge. On hinting that his mind was occupied with some scheme or other, he asked me if I knew what was contained in the packages. "Only provision for soldier," said I. "Bye! Robert! no money to pay him?"—"No," said I, "to my knowledge it was sent off some time before we left San Carlos, and I should like to know what you are thinking about." After some communication with his companions, he told me that he and his comrades thought they might seize some small arms left in our boat, throw the padrone and rowers overboard, and, in the confusion, pull the bongo into the Serapiqui branch—secure the money and valuables, and make the best of their way to the mouth of the Colorado

River, or Boca de la Tortuga, where they would be sure to meet some of their countrymen, with whose assistance they could set the Spaniards at defiance. He pointed out that the other bongo with the soldiers was always a considerable distance a-head of us—that there might still be something of value in the boat, and that only the padrone and ourselves were in the after part of it—so that, with my concurrence and assistance, it could easily be done.

I represented to him, that under all the circumstances, it was "*Not good*" for mere revenge;—that we could only get the boat and provisions, which were of no use to us. I pointed out the sergeant and his guard at Serapiqui, but he made light of them, saying, that with "the bush, his musket, and moocheat," he could finish them without assistance; and, notwithstanding my disapprobation, it was only the consideration that the other bongo, with the soldiers, might pull after them, that prevented their attempting to execute their plan!

On the afternoon of the third day we arrived at the fort. I do not think we were more than thirty-six hours in motion, descending the river, and I am convinced that the Indians could ascend to the lake in one of their common dories, with great ease in three days; and, would come down in less than half of that time. The commandant at the battery received me politely, regretted that I had been so long detained at Granada and San Carlos, which had been requested by those interested in the two schooners, who were still suspicious I might be in communication with the Independent cruisers:—that for fear of being again at-

tacked in the harbour, the garrison had been augmented; but that the vessels had sailed some time ago, and were now either in port, or in the hands of their enemies.

The day after we returned to the harbour, some Mosquito men arrived from the Boca de la Tortuga. They had heard of our seizure, and, in common with all the other Mosquito men, had orders from the admiral to furnish me, on my reappearance, with all things necessary to enable me to reach the Cape without delay, there being "a King's order," to supply provisions, men, horses, dories, &c.; and so eager were they to comply with this order, and hear our adventures, that they immediately proceeded for the Rama settlement, without waiting to kill manati, according to their first intention. Accordingly, after taking another view of the place where I had so narrowly escaped death, and having again viewed the entrances to the river in as careful a manner as prudence would admit, I embarked with these Indians, and, at the Rama settlement, was received by Pedro, the chief man, with great kindness and attention. He furnished a large canoe to convey us to Bluefields, and from thence to Pearl Kay Lagoon, where we were welcomed with great rejoicing, it having been reported that I had been put to death, and the Indians sold as slaves. At this place I parted with the Ramas, and Scipi, the headman, gave us a canoe up the lagoon to the harbour, within eight miles of the great river; we walked from thence to Drummer's, who provided us with horses, and on the following day, we reached Prinzapulko the native place of my Indians. By some means or other our approach had been made known, and

before we had well entered the savannah leading to the settlement, we were met by a great many of the people, who showed the most lively joy at the safe return of their friends, thus, as it were, restored from death. Brown and his lads were pulled from their horses, and almost devoured by the caresses of their friends and relations, who shed tears of joy at their safe return, venting, at the same time, execrations against the Spaniards; and I could not help shuddering when I thought what might have been my fate, if, through any neglect of mine, these people had perished, and I had afterwards fallen into the hands of their relations. I rode leisurely forward towards the King's house, but was soon rejoined by Brown, and by Para the headman, with other elders, who, having been made aware of the anxiety I had evinced for the safety and comfort of my companions, attributed their deliverance to my exertions, looked upon me as a true friend, and now showed me every mark of respect and kindness. They had, for some weeks past, contemplated an expedition against some of the Spanish settlements nearest to them, with the view of seizing as many Spaniards as possible, to be held as hostages for the safety of Brown and his companions—made many inquiries regarding the strength of the Spanish posts, and a mishla drink being prepared, we spent the evening of our return in mirth and rejoicing.

CHAPTER XIII.

GENEROUS CONDUCT OF THE INDIANS—THEIR ACCOUNT OF LORD NELSON'S EXPEDITION—JOURNEY TO CAPE GRACIAS A DIOS—SIZE AND VALUE OF MAHOGANY, &c.—MOSQUITO MEN—CRUELTY OF BARRAS—KING'S TOKEN—VOYAGE TO BALIZE—RACON—VISIT TO BLACK RIVER—KHARIBS AND KHARIB BREAD—SETTLEMENTS—HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF THE KHARIBEES—POYER COUNTRY—ISLANDS OF GUANAJA—ROATAN—STORMY PASSAGE ACROSS THE BAY OF HONDURAS.

During the few days I remained at Prinzapulko settlements, the headman earnestly entreated that I would determine on settling entirely amongst them, assured me that if I did so and became indentified as one of their tribe, they would not only defend me to the last man, but that I might command such a trade, through their means, both on the coast and in the interior, as would in a few years make me wealthy. Although my connection at the moment prevented me from listening to their proposals, I had no doubt of their feasibility. I stated to Brown and his companions, that, by the loss of my goods, vessel, &c., I was depriv-

ed of the means of remunerating them at present for the time they had lost, and the distress they had suffered; but I divided the remainder of my money among them, reserving barely as much as would pay my expenses to the Bay of Honduras. At first they not only refused remuneration entirely, but, to my surprise, their friends told me that they had reserved a part of the tortoise-shell intended for me before they heard of my seizure, that it was now entirely at my service, and that I might pay for it hereafter when I had recovered my losses. Moreover, although Brown and his Indians had, through my misfortunes, lost an entire fishing season, they generously insisted, upon paying over to their countrymen, the money they had just received from me, on account of this shell —a trait of character I might have in vain looked for among the Mosquito-men: But it must be kept in mind that these Prinzapulko Indians are of the genuine unmixed breed, and that, in all my visits to them, and in every transaction, I had found them just, upright, and honourable in their dealings.

Brown accompanied me to Cape Gracias a Dios; and as the wet season had set in early, and with uncommon violence, we kept the inner passage, calling at Brancmans and at the residence of Governor Clementi.

At the former place I again saw several of the old Indians who had been with Lord Nelson when he ascended the River San Juan. They uniformly agreed that that expedition had been undertaken at an improper season of the year; that they had been restricted in their mode of act-

ing, and obliged to conform to habits, discipline, and diet, which dispirited them. Disease, discontent and disappointment were the consequences, and the enterprise was abandoned, after a partial success.

Our recent seizure suggested many inquiries regarding the Spanish settlements on the Lake of Nicaragua; and from the confident manner in which they spoke of penetrating to the Lake, I have no doubt that these people, properly commanded, would, at any time, when a fair opportunity offered, attempt to lay these settlements under contribution.

I arrived at Cape Gracias a Dios in the latter end of October, and was received by the King with every mark of attention. He expressed much satisfaction at my safe return; explained the measures he had taken to assist me, and seemed pleased that his letters had been so far attended to. I agreed, at my departure, to take charge of two very large dories, which he was desirous of sending to the British settlement in the Bay of Honduras, to convince the merchants there of the extraordinary size, and excellent quality of the timber which could be procured in his country. These boats were each cut out of a single tree, one mahogany, the other cedar; measuring about thirty-five feet in length; nearly six feet in breadth; and above five feet in depth. *

I have already given some account of the disposition and propensities of the Mosquito men, and, before taking leave of them, shall add some remarks regarding their manners and customs.

They do not seem to possess, any distinct idea, of a future state of rewards and punishments

* See Note VIII.

whatever others assert who may have put the question, and received a different answer. I need scarcely add, that it is only by living with a people, and mixing familiarly among them, at all times and seasons, that their genuine sentiments can be discovered. They are, nevertheless, like all ignorant people, exceedingly superstitious, and believe firmly in the appearance of "duppies" or ghosts, of which they are very much afraid, attributing their appearance to some malignant design, or evil purpose. Many of the Mosquito-men dare scarcely venture out of their houses at night, without a companion, for fear of those ideal spirits. The mind of King George Frederick, was so imbued with this superstitious dread, that I have repeatedly seen him terrified to pass the threshold after sunset.

Their great evil spirit is the "woolsaw" or devil, who, in their opinion, by his malign influence, destroys their crops, spoils their fishing, and does them other very grievous injuries. To propitiate this evil spirit, is a part of the Sookeah man's business; and it is not the least profitable part of it.

A belief in witchcraft, and the power of Obeah practices, seems also to have got firm possession of the minds of the Mosquito-men; and to these are attributed many of the cures, which, as surgeons and physicians, the Sookeah men perform. As a proof of this, I need only relate one instance. Frank, a negro slave, formerly belonging to Colonel August, had run away from Balize, and had been received at Patook by old Jack, a person formerly mentioned. Frank had acquired some knowledge of the treatment of a particular com-

plaint, caught by both General Robinson and Barras, at Honduras. Barras was cured, but Robinson, from previous neglect and obstinacy, became so exceedingly ill that, after undergoing a surgical operation at Balize, he died. About that time a son of Barras, who succeeded Robinson as general, being ill, the regular Sookeah man maliciously declared that the Negro Sookeah's powers being strongest, he could not, on account of the Negro's interference, save the child; upon this Frank was sent for, but the child died, and, immediately after the funeral, Barras came with a strong party of his adherents to Patook, and, seizing the Negro, determined, in spite of the poor fellow's protestations of innocence—to put him to *the proof*. He was bound hand and foot, and thrown into the river, but, by great exertion and presence of mind, he contrived to keep himself from drowning. He was then taken in a canoe to a deeper part of the river, but, still contriving to keep himself afloat, he was declared guilty, and being fastened to a rope with weights appended to him, he sunk to rise no more alive. Old Jack afterwards dragged out the dead body and charitably buried it. Barras afterwards accused Old Jack of Obeah practices, annoying both Negroes and Kharibees by driving away their cattle, seizing one of Old Jack's sons as a slave, and other such acts of oppression—that until the King put an end to them for the moment, they contemplated leaving their plantations, held ever since the English evacuated the place, and giving themselves up as slaves to the descendants of their former owners.

The method of preparing mishlaw drink, already described, will remind the reader of the

Otaheiteans, and other South Sea islanders; and a similarity of customs may also be noticed in the burial of the dead. The body is buried in some pleasant part of a savannah, and a hut erected over the grave, several earthen jars with water, and also fruit and other provisions are lodged in the hut, and to keep up the supply for months, nay sometimes for years, is considered a sacred duty. Another system is to consider the house in which there is a sick person *tabooed*, if I may use that expression:—for instance, the last time I passed that of the late General Robinson, I was specially prevented from approaching near to it, and obliged to make a considerable circuit to leeward;—I argued that it would be better to keep to the windward of the house, but that was strictly prohibited, because, by going on that side, we might kill the sick man by intercepting, or "taking away his breath." Their demonstrations of grief for the death of a relation, are not only exceedingly violent in the first instance, but are kept up for a very considerable period in a peculiar manner, sometimes for years, especially if the dead person's family is beloved in the settlement. I have frequently, in the middle of the night, heard some female relation of the deceased commence a sort of low melancholy howl or lament, enumerating the real or supposed good qualities of the deceased, and the regret of his friends for his loss; the females within hearing chime in with this doleful chant, which, increasing in loudness, spreads through the whole settlement, and in the silence of the night has a very mournful effect. When these sounds were once fairly set agoing, it became useless to attempt

sleeping any more that night, as they generally continued until daylight. Christmas is universally observed all over the Mosquito Shore, by both Indians, Samboes, and Kharibees; but for no other reason that I could ever learn, except that it was "English fashion," and happens at a time when it does not interfere with their fishing and other pursuits. They in general apply to the traders sometime beforehand to know the number of days which must elapse; and, to keep an account of these, they have recourse to the knotted cord formerly alluded to. The principal men send presents of rum, &c. to the King, which enables him to gratify fully their drunken propensities, and as they come from the most distant settlements, and none of them appear empty handed, the houses are generally crowded to the door, and there is for several days a constant scene of intoxication.

In travelling along the Mosquito Shore, it is customary for the King to give any friend of his who is a stranger, or travelling specially "on King's business," *a token*, by producing which, all the King's people readily assist him on his journey. This token is sometimes a gold-headed cane, a spy-glass, or any other article known to belong to him. On one occasion I obtained a sabre as a King's token, but I seldom had occasion to use any thing of that sort, being known on the coast; and although I always offered some slight remuneration, for provisions and assistance, such payment was in many instances peremptorily refused, especially after it was known that I had been seized by the Spaniards, and lost so much property. That circumstance alone seemed sufficient to entitle me to every accommodation gratis:—for instance at Ku-

kari, when I latterly visited that place, I found only one old man with his wife and children, the other people having moved up to their plantations in the interior to await the termination of the rainy season,—yet these people insisted upon killing their last fowls to give me "a good belly-full," and until they have a plain declaration from their guest to that effect, they never cease insisting that he must continue to eat.

The large dories, formerly mentioned, being put in order for the passage to Balize, and a crew of ten expert Indians appointed to each, with a plentiful supply of provisions, I took charge of the one made of cedar; and the other, of mahogany, was intrusted to Racon, a Mosquito man, acquainted with the navigation of the coast, and with the different kays and shoals in the bay,—we were accompanied by other Mosquito-men in canoes with various articles for sale at Balize, upon the value of which I was to have a commission.

We left the Cape about midnight with the land-breeze, by the help of which, and the use of our paddles, we arrived off False Cape before the sea-breeze set in, which blowing fresh, and well to the eastward, conveyed us at a great rate down the coast. Towards evening when the breeze began to fall off, we stood, close in to the land, and in the morning considered it prudent to run over the bar at Black River, to endeavour to procure a compass from some of the new settlers. We found these people in good spirits, and in hopes of being soon joined by emigrants daily expected from England.—I here met with two chiefs of the neighbouring Kharibs, one named Big, the other Little Louis, the former of whom had, with some

of his people, been assisting the settlers to erect houses, and clear ground, and enable them to secure a good crop of early provisions. I promised to meet these men at their principal settlement; and Mr Warren, and Colonel Gordon, having furnished me with what I wanted, we took advantage of the land-breeze in the evening, and again recrossed the bar. We ran down the coast to one of the principal Kharibee settlements, about twelve miles from Black River, were received with great kindness, and readily furnished with as many fowls, and as much fruit, Kharib bread, and other provisions, as we chose to have, for which they would scarcely accept any remuneration. The method of preparing this bread, a considerable quantity of which is sent to Balize, and other places for sale, is as follows:—Having selected from their extensive plantations, some of the largest and finest cassava roots, they are carefully skinned and washed; then grated upon large tin graters, procured for that purpose from the traders; the substance is then washed in clean water, which is frequently shifted and run off, to free the cassava, which is now of a brownish colour, from a strong acid liquor, said to be poisonous; the whole mass, when sufficiently whitened, is put into a long bag or basket, generally made of the spathes of a particular sort of tree; this basket is placed in a perpendicular position, between two posts; and, by the application of a lever, every drop of moisture is pressed out; the farinaceous substance is then dried in the sun, and either kept for use as a substitute for flour, or made into round cakes, of eighteen or twenty inches in diameter, and about a quarter of an inch in thickness, toasted upon thin iron plates, over a

clear fire of wood-ashes. When properly prepared, these cakes will keep good for months, and, when new, taste pleasantly, and are a strong nourishing food. The flour is also used in hot water as gruel, made more or less thick, seasoned with salt and Chili pepper; or, sometimes, eaten with sugar-cane syrup.

These Kharibees, or Caribs as they are usually called in Europe, were originally natives of the Leeward Islands, but having become troublesome to the Government of St Vincents, were, sometime ago, banished from that Island, and conveyed to Roatan or Rattan, an island in the Gulf of Honduras, and means afforded them for forming a settlement there:—they were supplied with clothing; and a large vessel containing provisions, agricultural implements, and other stores, was placed, in a secure harbour of the island, entirely at the disposal of their chiefs. Grieved at their banishment from St Vincents, and careless of life, they improvidently suffered the store-ship to sink at her anchors, and thus lost the greater part of every thing provided for their future comfort. Being visited by the Spaniards, from Truxillo, many of them went to that place, and built a village to the westward of the town. As their liberty had been guaranteed, many of them entered the Spanish service, under subalterns appointed from their own tribe; and, at present, they are the most numerous part of the population of Truxillo.

Some of them, however, who were at first discontented with their situation, emigrated from thence, and from Roatan, to the Mosquito Shore, where they have two principal settlements; one of them near the Great Rocks, about twenty miles to the

westward of Black River, the other near Cape Cameron. The Mosquito King having given them all the encouragement in his power, they extended a chain of small settlements as far as Patook. But by the oppressive conduct of the late chief, Robinson, and his successor Barras, they have for the most part retired, and concentrated themselves to the northward of Black River, where they are rapidly increasing in numbers, and now bid defiance to their enemies. Their houses are built more neatly than those of the Mosquito-men, and have an air of greater comfort and independence. Each house has its small plantation attached to it, kept in very neat order; they had assisted the few settlers at Black River in erecting houses and clearing ground; but these settlers were not possessed of sufficient capital to turn the labours of these men to farther account. Louis, one of their headmen, informed me, that they never interfered with the Indians, by intermarriages or otherwise; and, whatever their ancestors of St Vincents may have been, they are now honest and industrious. They are not so expert, as the Indians, at striking fish, or with the bow and arrow; but, with the cutlass, they are equal to the Valientes; and with muskets, of which every Kharibee has one, they excel all the Mosquito-men and Indians. Their settlements are in general close to the sea-shore; they cultivate rice, cassava, sugar cane, &c. and have abundance of hogs, ducks, turkeys, and other small stock, which, with considerable quantities of the bread already mentioned, they convey for sale to Truxillo and Balize. At the latter place they hire themselves, for several months at a time, to the mahogany and logwood cutters of the bay, and work with the

regular woodmen. These people's ancestors were the last unremoved descendents of the race which occupied many of the Islands on the Carribean Sea, at the time of their discovery by Columbus; considerably modified, however, by their mixture with the Negroes.

They are in general of a dark red colour approaching to, and often not easily distinguishable from black; they have the short curly hair of the Negro; but are remarkably clean skinned, well made, active, and vigorous. Their features are agreeable, particularly those of the young people; and I never could perceive any of that malformation of the head mentioned by some writers in their description of the Kharibees of the Orinoco. These latter, however, together with several other tribes inhabiting the banks of that river, the Caura, and Cumana, who are said to be marked not only by that peculiarity, but also by superior size, and strength, were a different people, generally at war with the red men of St Vincents, and the other Leeward Islands. The country behind their present settlements is fertile, hilly, and well watered; having several considerable rivers and streams, on the banks of which are abundance of the finest mahogany, dyewoods, sarsaparilla, and other valuable natural productions of the soil. The Poyer hills, called by the Spaniards Sierra de la Cruz, come down almost to the sea-shore.

We left the Kharibees in the evening, and from the Great Rocks stood over for Bonacca or Guanaja, a small island discovered in 1502 by Columbus on his fourth voyage, when he had his first interview with the natives of the continent. We reached this island early on the following morning,

and landed opposite a watering place in an excellent harbour on the south side; the beach, above high watermark, was thickly covered by cocoa nuts; and near the watering place, innumerable tracks of the wild hog. The island contains hills of considerable elevation, thickly covered with trees; and it is said to contain beds of limestone, and some ores of zinc. From the east end of Bonacca to the small island of Barbaratte, there is an unconnected chain of reefs and patches of rock, some with deep channels betwixt them, and others with not more than eight or ten feet of water which is so clear, that we never lost sight of the bottom, and frequently saw large shoals of fish sporting about. We landed on Barbaratte, which is thickly overgrown with prickly plants and thick underwood, on the borders of which I found three or four sorts of wild grapes. Our fishers procured a large green turtle, and caught some very fine fish; in the evening we pursued our voyage, running along the remaining part of Barbarratte and the small Island of Moratte, towards the island of Roatan.

Roatan is about thirty miles long, and eight or nine in breadth; the land is moderately high, covered with wood, except at the west end, where there are some savannahs on which mules and other cattle used to be raised. This beautiful island has an excellent harbour, easily defended; it was once in possession of the English, who erected batteries completely commanding this harbour, and marked out a space at its end for the erection of a town. The woods abound in deer, wild hogs, gibeonites, pigeons, with millions of parrots and other birds, many of them excellent food, and the whole coast

swarms with fish and turtle, both green and hawksbill. The English withdrew their troops from it at the time they abandoned the Mosquito Shore, and owing to their liability to attacks from the Indians and others in those troublesome times, none of these fine islands are now inhabited.

From Roatan the Island Utila is visible; and after a short run we landed at a low beach at the west end, where the water was perfectly smooth. The soil of all these islands is rich, and well adapted for the cultivation of cotton, coffee, &c.; and the natural productions of each are similar. Innumerable flocks of parrots and pigeons were flying about; and cocoa nuts were so very plentiful, that whole cargoes could be procured with very little trouble.

We left this island on the second day, but had scarcely got clear away from the reefs, which we did before sunset, when we experienced a tremendous swell from the north-east; and, notwithstanding that we had a considerable quantity of ballast on board, together with the ten Indians and myself, I found our vessel too light to make a true course. In the night it blew a heavy gale, and although the mahogany craft kept to windward much better than our cedar vessel, she was constantly shipping seas; and on that account was obliged to bear away, and follow in our wake. During the night we carried away our mast, and, when again getting it up, we shipped a sea that nearly filled us, and must have sent any ordinary boat to the bottom.

The greater part of the Mosquito men immediately jumped overboard to lighten the vessel,

while the remainder promptly employed themselves in heaving out the water, using their hats, calabashes, or whatever else was readiest for that purpose. During this operation we kept the boat before the swell, the men overboard held by the gunnels until we were ready to readmit them, and they again made sail with as much fearless alacrity as if nothing unusual had occurred. In the morning we found ourselves close to Glover's Reef, upon which there were dreadful breakers; but, as the dawn approached, the wind moderated, and we got round the south end, into smooth water. Racon and his crew had much difficulty to keep the water out of their dorie; and ours, although not so steady in the sea, was, upon the whole, the most safe; as she would not only have floated, but borne a considerable weight, when full of water. The smaller canoes had kept more to windward, and got safe in by the Tobacco Kay Channel, without the least damage. I had a good opportunity, during this passage, of judging how far the Mosquito-men could be depended upon in bad weather; and I formed a very favourable opinion of them as boatmen. They were always ready to obey orders,—never seemed to lose their presence of mind,—and I have no doubt that, with proper instructions, and experience in managing larger vessels, they might, in their own seas, be made good seamen.

We found, on one of the Kays, at Glover's Reef, a party of fishermen curing fish and turtle for the Balize market; and, in the course of the day, I had an opportunity of obtaining a passage to Balize in a trading vessel from Omoa, the crew of which had stopped to gather cocoa-nuts for sale

there. The Mosquito men being desirous of remaining for the same purpose, and to procure fish for sale at the British settlement, I left *the fleet* under charge of Racon, and they in a few days joined me at Balize, where, by orders of Colonel Arthur, his Majesty's superintendant, they were kindly received, and regular rations allowed them.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOSQUITO COUNTRY—ITS FITNESS FOR EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS—CLIMATE, PRODUCTIONS, &c.—FORMER BRITISH SETTLEMENTS THERE—NATIVES, AND NECESSITY FOR AFFORDING THEM PROTECTION—DISPUTES REGARDING THE MOSQUITO SHORE—OPINION OF MR EDWARDS—DIFFICULTY OF ACCESS TO THE CENTRAL STATES FROM THE EAST COAST—ROUTE BY OMOA TO GUATEMALA—LEAVE BALIZE—TAKEN BY PIRATES—ESCAPE TO CUBA, AND RETURN TO ENGLAND.

THE recent injudicious and ill-seconded attempts of an individual, * to fix a colony of Europeans on the Mosquito Shore—together with the misrepresentations to which these gave rise, and the general want of attention to correct information on the subject—have induced many persons to adopt the most erroneous ideas of the soil, climate, and capabilities of this country.

My own experience, and the information ob-

* Sir Gregor Macgregor. See some Account of the Mosquito Territory, &c. from the original manuscripts of the late Colonel Hodgson, Edin. 1822.—Hastie's Narrative, and various publications on the subject.

tained from several Europeans, many of them nearly a century old, who were residing on the coast little more than a year ago, is, to me, a sufficient proof that several parts of it are decidedly more salubrious than any one of our settlements in the West Indies. It is well known, that if men are located in low marshy ground, in the neighbourhood of stagnant water, the consequences are injurious to them in every country, but more especially in a hot climate:—but I venture to affirm, and I do so without fear of contradiction, that in dry situations similar to the Valiente settlements, where the waters quickly run off, Europeans would, generally speaking, enjoy an almost uninterrupted state of health, and live to a good old age; and I venture to add, that in such situations, the general mass of European cultivators could, with safety, perform more than double the work presently done by the Valientes, or any other tribe of Indians. Many of the dry savannahs, and fine ridges, are equally healthy; but it is in the interior, on the banks of a river, that, as an agriculturist, I would prefer forming a settlement; and many hundred thousands of Europeans could find an asylum in such situations along the line of coast possessed by the Indians, and in the hilly country behind the Kharibbee settlements, without putting any of the native residents to inconvenience for want of room.

The mosquitoes, sandflies, and other insects; the poisonous reptiles, and wild beasts, of which so much is said in England, are, as regards the situations alluded to, mere bugbears to frighten children;—the former are only troublesome on the

low sandy beaches and swamps, some settlements being entirely clear of them; and the latter seldom come near the habitations of men, or do any harm. It has been asserted, and I am more inclined to confirm than deny it, that nearly the whole line of coast from Cape Honduras to the River San Juan, is free from those violent hurricanes which sometimes rage with such destructive fury in the West India Islands; and it has also been affirmed, that the same tract of country is not subject to those dreadful earthquakes which have so often shaken, and, at one time or other, almost entirely destroyed the Spanish American towns towards the Pacific Ocean; spreading death and dismay amongst the wretched inhabitants. I have in the course of the preceding narrative endeavoured to describe such of the valuable productions of the country as came under my notice; and I now repeat that inexhaustible supplies of cedar, mahogany, santa maria, rose-wood, and many other exceedingly valuable timbers, may be obtained on the coast, and on the banks of all the rivers in the interior:—Dyewoods, gums, drugs, and medicinal plants of various descriptions, are plentifully dispersed all over the country. The savannahs rear considerable numbers of cattle; and, if there was a demand for them, innumerable herds could be supported on the plains close to the shore, as well as in the interior. Past experience confirms the assertion, that the soil is well adapted to the cultivation of sugar, coffee, cotton, tobacco, indigo, and all the other productions of a tropical climate; and I have no doubt that a sufficient quantity of rice and Indian corn might be produced, to supply the whole of our posses-

sions in the West Indies with these necessaries. The turtle fishery might not only be protected from interlopers, but, by using proper methods to preserve the animal from wasteful destruction, a much greater quantity of tortoise-shell might be procured.

Perhaps it is not generally known, that it was owing to political difficulties, and not to any incapabilities of the soil or climate, that the British Government were induced to break up their infant settlements, on the Mosquito Shore, at a time when they were rapidly increasing in prosperity and that it was with the greatest reluctance, and only in obedience to positive orders, that the British settlers slowly and discontentedly left their plantations. Many of the Creoles and people of colour, however, as well as some of the Europeans, preferred remaining at all hazards; and I have had occasion to state that, even at the present day, their descendants still reside unmolested, and comparatively comfortable, in their old possessions, particularly at Bluefields, Pearl Kay Lagoon, and other places on the coast, which are by them, and their Indian friends, considered *English* settlements.

The actual number of persons, exclusive of the aborigines, under the British jurisdiction in the year 1757, according to the account of their superintendant, Colonel Hodgson, was about eleven hundred souls; and in the year 1770, Mr Edwards estimates the number at fourteen hundred. * The greater part of these people were at Black

* Some account of the British settlements on the Mosquito Shore drawn up from the manuscripts of the late Colonel Hodgson, &c.—Edin. 2d Ed. also Edward's History of the West Indies, 5th edition—Appendix.

River, Cape River, and Brancmans:—The former place, where the British had erected a small fort, was the only one of the deserted settlements which the Spaniards dared even attempt to take into their possession; but they were immediately driven from it by the Indian General, Robinson, whom I have so often had occasion to mention. The remainder of the British, at Cape Gracias a Dios, Sandy Bay, Pearl Kay Lagoon, the Corn Islands, Bluefields, Punta Gordo, Brewers Lagoon, Plantain River, Miztisoe Creek, and other parts of the coast, as far southward as Chiriqui Lagoon, were never molested. They owned twelve merchant vessels, several of them in the European trade, the others constantly trading to Jamaica, and the United States; and their exports of mahogany, sarsaparilla, tortoise-shell and mules; together with specie, indigo, cocoa, hides, and tallow got in barter with the Spaniards, were very considerable, and daily increasing.

In the year 1776, the sloop Morning Star, Alexander Blair and Dr Charles Irving owners, having been seized by two Spanish *Guarda Costas*—a memorial drawn up by Bryan Edwards, * explanatory of the right which Britain had to retain her settlements on the Mosquito Coast, was laid before parliament. In that memorial Mr Edwards clearly traces the connexion which had subsisted between the British and Free Indians on the Mosquito Shore, since the reign of Charles the First: and contends, that by the seventh article of the treaty of Madrid, in 1670, the repeated

* The historian of the West Indies, one of his Majesty's Counsel for the Island of Jamaica, F. R. S. S. A. &c. *vide 5th edition of his Works—Appendix.*

cessions made by the Indians to the King of Great Britain were recognised and confirmed;—and, that these cessions were not rendered invalid by the treaty of Aix la Chapelle; consequently—that the order issued after the conclusion of that treaty to withdraw our troops, and dismantle the fortifications built by the British at Black River, &c. "were evidently grounded on a most unaccountable notion that the Mosquito Shore was part of the Bay of Honduras; an astonishing instance of inattention, to call it by no harsher name, as it is no part of the Bay of Honduras, so neither is it any part *of the territory of Spain in that part of the world.* But, whatever interpretation may have formerly been given to these Spanish treaties, they may now be considered as no longer in existence; and, therefore, it is to be hoped the British Government will, in good time, see the propriety of again extending its protection to the descendents of these British settlers and not abandon them, and their Indian friends, to the restrictive regulations, and arbitrary exactions of the new governments of Spanish America; who, although they cannot have derived from their ancestors, or otherwise, any well-founded claim to the Indian coast, or Mosquito Shore, seem, by their despotic and arbitrary decrees, to assume the right of imposing, upon these free people, a yoke similar to that which they have thrown upon their own shoulders. It appears certain, that the natives will never assimilate with the citizens of these new States, nor willingly submit to their domination; and as the latter are not at present sufficiently powerful to occupy the Indian country by force of arms, it is to be feared that, unless prevented by the inter-

ference of Great Britain, they may cede their pretensions to the United States; whose traders, speaking the same language as the English, have been gradually spreading themselves on the coast and undermining ours;—and, if they ultimately obtain a firm footing, they may not only do serious injury to our West India possessions; but, on some pretence or other, overpower, and by forced labour, at canals or other works, gradually destroy the natives. Positions strong by nature, and easily fortified at a trifling expense, have been pointed out; and Bryan Edwards, Colonel Hodgson, Captain Wright, and other well informed men, have repeatedly insisted upon the advantages to be derived from the occupancy of some points on the coasts; more especially that our West India possessions would be thereby strengthened, and our colonists on any emergency, such as a hurricane or other sudden calamity, could in a few days be supplied from thence with provisions, stock, and lumber,—instead of being obliged to depend upon uncertain arrivals from the United States and Canada; or, in the event of war, from perhaps a much greater distance.

I have particularly described one of the principal routes by which the Central States have access to the Atlantic; and, I need only give a short sketch of the direct road from the Bay of Honduras to the capital, to show how nearly they are shut out from all communication with the east coast; and the consequent difficulty of maintaining a free intercourse, and exchange of commodities, with Europe and the West Indies; premising, that the shore of what is termed the Province of Honduras, and the greater part of that Province

itself, is, for the most part, either uninhabitable, or in the hands of the Kharibees and hostile Indians; who, without regarding the almost deserted towns of Truxillo and Omoa, could at any time render even this, the most *direct* route, dangerous or impracticable.

The coast, to the westward of Cape Honduras and Truxillo, is low, swampy, shut out from the regular sea-breeze, and exceedingly unhealthy. The distance in a direct line from Truxillo to Omoa, is about 60 or 70 leagues, and a recent traveller, who seems to entertain a favourable opinion of the Central States, gives the following account of his journey from thence to the city of Guatemala. * On their arrival at Omoa, he and his companions preferred remaining two days on shipboard, rather than expose themselves to the putrescent vapours which exhale from the marshes. Providing themselves with mattresses, provisions, &c. they left Omoa on the 28*th April* 1825, and travelled *twenty-two* leagues to the mouth of the river that empties itself from the Golfo Dulce into the sea. Proceeding up that river, they entered the small gulf, and, crossing a streight into the *Golfo Dulce*, descended it to *Izabel*, a trifling village recently established, inhabited by a few negroes: here they sold their mattrasses and bought *amaches*, a lighter kind of bedding: they took up their abode in a small hut, and the only provision they could procure was a few fowls. This village is *eighteen* leagues from the river above mentioned: leaving it at five in the morning, they crossed the

* Journal of Dr Lavagnino. New Monthly Magazine for Decem. 1825, No. 60. MS. account, &c.

mountain Del Micho, and arrived at Micho in the evening, a distance of about seven leagues. "The road we traversed on that day was horribly bad, and we often sunk deep into the mud. In the rainy season the mules often perish in lakes of mud. Sometimes the traveller passes on the verge of precipices, where it is necessary to shut his eyes not to be terrified by beholding danger in its most frightful aspect. Then he is forced to trust entirely to the experience of the mules, which are wonderfully sagacious in selecting paths, but notwithstanding this sagacity, they sometimes sank to the belly in mud. At other times, the traveller is compelled to pass on an inclined plane, from which he every instant appears destined to slip and fall into quagmires. If his attention be diverted from his perils and difficulties, he hears the roarings of lions and tigers, and a confused noise arising from the howlings of animals, and the singing of birds, the beautiful and lively colours of whose plumage, seems to be brought into view in some sort to qualify the scene of horror and of fright around." The travellers slept in a hut at Micho, boiled a fowl, and made some soup with biscuit. Next day they continued their journey, on the top of a mountainous pine-ridge, where they still heard the roarings of tigers—the road tolerably good, but the descent inconvenient; they then came to a grove of wild palms: in some places the scene was beautiful, in others horribly savage. In the afternoon they arrived at *Encuentros*, a mean hamlet with few inhabitants, on the banks of the river Montagua, having a post-house, and custom-house officers: the distance from Micho is about *six* leagues. From Encuentros to Guana is *four*

leagues, the road mountainous. From thence to Gualam, where the country begins to assume a better appearance, and to be in some degree inhabited, the distance is *four* leagues more. "Gualam is a country containing four thousand souls: the district is daily increasing in prosperity and population by reason of the river Montagua passing in its neighbourhood, by which stream, all the merchandise from Omoa is transported to Guatemala."

On the 5th of May they travelled *two* leagues to San Antonio, where they found provisions cheap; and as none were to be had on the road, they here renewed their store. From San Antonio to San Pablo, an Indian village with a church, the distance is *five* leagues: they arrived there at eight in the evening, and reposed till eleven, when, trusting to the light of the moon, they went *three* leagues farther to Zacapa, a large village situated in an extensive plain. The road last gone over was steep and stony; they often met convoys of mules laden with merchandise, and saw many tents filled with goods lying in heaps, guarded by one or two white men; and they observed some Indians travelling nearly naked and loaded like "beasts of burden." The heat of the sun was oppressive, and created such intolerable thirst, that the sight of a hut promising a draught of water was hailed as a luxury. At a short distance from Zacapa the river of that name unites with the San Augustine to form the river Montagua, which at Gualam, nine leagues farther, becomes navigable for large canoes forty leagues to the sea. From Zacapa to Similappa consisting of about a hun-

dred small huts, the distance is *eight* leagues, and Sobecas is four leagues farther. The roads were strown with dead horses and cows, in consequence of the pastures being universally burnt up. Proceeding by Guastatojas, a town containing several stone houses, to Incontro and Roncadilla, *seven* leagues distant—they ascended a mountain, and passed over various hills in succession, *four* leagues to Montegrande, and from thence to the estate of father Caballeros, *five* leagues farther. Travelling latterly was pleasanter, the road being more shaded from the sun.

On the 13th of May they travelled on a narrow road on the brink of a precipice, near to an extinguished volcano; and passing over a high mountain reached the estate of San Jose, *five* leagues from the estate last mentioned. Here they found the air cool and salubrious. They rested in the evening at another estate *two* leagues farther, and next morning (the 14*th of May*) went forward by a road, at first good, but which gradually grows worse to the city of Guatemala, situated in a plain, which, although badly cultivated, contains many Indian villages. They had frequently during the last few days met troops of Indians "of both sexes loaded like beasts of burden, walking to the sound of a drum." It seems only necessary to add, that the whole distance from Omoa to the city of Guatemala is ninety leagues; and that, by a report of their own Chamber of Commerce, merchandise cannot, in many instances, be transported, from the Bay of Honduras, to the capital, in less than eight months!

The route by the River San Juan, therefore, although at an inconvenient distance from the Cen-

tral part of the States, is evidently the one by which European commerce will ultimately pass to the side of the Pacific. There is still a third road, namely, that by Matina and Cartago; but its distance from the capital of the New States, and the want of a harbour on the Atlantic side, form insuperable objections to its ever becoming attractive except to smugglers.

To return to my proceedings at Balize—I had drawn up and delivered to Colonel Arthur and the Reverend Mr Armstrong a short sketch of the different settlements where the establishment of missionaries and commercial depôts were most likely to prove successful, and these enlightened men seemed to be fully impressed with the importance of the subject, both in a public and private point of view; but the unjust clamours afterwards raised and kept up by a few interested individuals against these worthy men, whose only crime seems to have been a desire to do good, and to dispense impartial justice to all classes, without distinction of rank or colour, prevented their sound and charitable endeavours from being effectual. The colonel was shortly recalled from the superintendency,—to the great regret and dissatisfaction of the population of Balize; which circumstance, together with the wavering conduct of the Mosquito King, the jarring interests of the Balize merchants, and other circumstances not interesting to the general reader, rendered it necessary, after one or two inefficient voyages, to seek more effectual support in England.

But I was still destined, before leaving the Western world, to be involved in another dangerous adventure. The small schooner in which I

was proceeding from Balize to Jamaica was captured, near the Island of Cuba, by a large piratical row-boat, containing a numerous crew of ferocious desperadoes of all colours. Without the means of effectual resistance, and being at the moment nearly becalmed, we had no alternative but quietly to submit to our fate. Having plundered our persons of every thing valuable, the pirates ordered us to quit the vessel in a leaky old canoe, and await their further pleasure at a small desert kay or island, seen at a little distance. When in the act of going over the schooner's side, one of these gentry took a fancy to my jacket, (I had previously lost my hat), which I pulled off, and threw down at his feet, telling him to "take it." Not liking the manner in which I complied with his request, he without ceremony struck a furious blow at my head with his cutlass, the weight of which sent me into the canoe in a state of insensibility. When I recovered my recollection, I found that I had instinctively put myself in a defensive attitude, while he was deliberately taking aim at me with a pistol which fortunately missed fire, and in the meantime my companions kept pulling away from the vessel. We landed for a short period on the Sandy Kay; but having no doubt that, so soon as the pirates had removed the most valuable part of the cargo, they would set her on fire, and complete their crime by murdering us, we came to the determination of endeavouring to effect our escape. Stopping the leaks in our crazy canoe in the best manner we could, we got her round to the side of the kay opposite to that on which they were plundering the schooner; and, keeping the kay interposed between us, dur-

ing the night, in the course of which we saw the light of the burning schooner, we rowed in the direction of the Island of Cuba, the south side of which we happily reached,—and entering a small creek, we waded for sometime through mud and swamps, until we came so a small Spanish fort or outpost, where we were well treated, and shortly afterwards sent, across the Island of Havannah, from whence, I readily obtained a passage home to England.

APPENDIX.

Note I. Preface, page xix.

"I Alonso de Ojeda, servant of the most high and powerful Kings of Castile and Leon, the conquerors of barbarous nations, their messenger and captain, notify to you and declare, in as ample form as I am capable, that God our Lord, who is one and eternal, created the heaven and the earth, and one man and one woman, of whom you and we, and all the men who have been or shall be in the world, are descended. But as it has come to pass through the number of generations during more than five thousand years, that they have been dispersed into different parts of the world, and are divided into various kingdoms and provinces, because one country was not able to contain them, nor could they have found in one the means of subsistence and preservation; therefore God our Lord gave the charge of all these people to one man, named St Peter, whom he constituted the Lord and head of all the human race, that all men, in whatever place they are born, or in whatever faith or place they are educated, might yield obedience unto him. The whole world he hath subjected to his jurisdiction, and commanded him to establish his residence in Rome, as the most proper place for the government of the world. He likewise promised and gave him power to establish his authority in every other part of the world, and to judge and govern all Christians, Moors, Jews, Gentiles, and all other people of whatever sect or faith they may be. To him is given the name of *Pope*, which signifies admirable, great father and guardian, because he is the father and governor of all men. Those who lived in the time of this holy father obeyed and acknowledged him as their Lord and King, and the Emperor of the universe. The same has been observed with respect to them who, since his time, have been chosen to the pontificate. Thus it now continues, and will continue to the end of the world.

"One of these pontiffs, as Lord of the world, hath made a grant of these Islands, and of the Tierra Firmé of the Ocean Sea, to the Catholic Kings of Castile, Don Ferdinand and Donna Isabella, of glorious memory, and their successors, our Sovereigns, with all they contain, as is more fully expressed in certain deeds passed upon that occasion, which you may see if you desire it. Thus his Majesty is King and Lord of these Islands, and of the Continent, in virtue of this donation; and as King and Lord aforesaid, most of the islands to which his title hath been notified have recognised his Majesty, and now yield obedience and subjection to him as their Lord, voluntarily and without resistance; and instantly, as soon as they received information, they obeyed the religious men sent by the King to preach to them, and to instruct them in our holy faith; and all these, of their own free will, without any recompense or gratuity, became Christians, and continue to be so; and his Majesty having received them graciously under his protection, has commanded that they should be treated in the same manner as his other subjects and vassals. You are bound and obliged to act in the same manner. Therefore I now entreat and require you to consider attentively what I have declared to you: and that you may more perfectly comprehend it, that you take such time as is reasonable, in order that you may acknowledge the church as the superior and guide of the universe, and likewise the holy father called the Pope, in his own right, and his Majesty by his appointment, as King and Sovereign Lord of these Islands, and of the Tierra Firmé; and that you consent that the aforesaid holy fathers shall declare and preach to you the doctrines above mentioned. If you do this, you act well, and perform that to which you are bound and obliged; and his Majesty, and I in his name, will receive you with love and kindness, and will leave you, your wives and children, free and exempt from servitude, and in the enjoyment of all you possess, in the same manner as the inhabitants of the islands. Besides this, his Majesty will bestow upon you many privileges, exemptions, and rewards. But if you will not comply, or maliciously delay to obey my injunction, then, with the help of God, I will enter your country by force; I will carry on war against you with the utmost violence; I will subject you to the yoke of obedience to the Church and King; I will take your wives and child-

ren, and will make them slaves, and sell or dispose of them according to his Majesty's pleasure; I will seize your goods, and do you all the mischief in my power, as rebellious subjects, who will not acknowledge or submit to their lawful Sovereign. And I protest that all the bloodshed and calamities which shall follow are to be imputed to you, and not to his Majesty, or to me, or the gentlemen who serve under me; and as I have now made this declaration and requisition unto you, I require the notary here present to grant me a certificate of this, subscribed in proper form."

Note II. Page 53.

Porto Bello has often been described. The harbour was discovered by Columbus in 1502, and the town built in 1584. It was captured by the Buccanier Captain Morgan about the year 1680; by Admiral Vernon in 1740; and again by Sir Gregor MacGregor in 1819. The Isthmus is here about sixty miles broad. The direct route overland to Panama, the seat of the American Congress, is described by Surgeon Weatherhead, who, with his companions in misfortune, travelled it in 1819. Their first day's journey was by narrow and difficult paths through bushes, brambles, and stunted trees: they repeatedly crossed a rapid river, and late in the afternoon began to ascend the heights of Santa Clara by a path narrow, steep, and in some places so perpendicular, that one at a time they were obliged to climb upon their hands and feet; in other places they sunk to their knees in mud, extricating themselves by means of the roots of the trees and bushes. They rested in huts on those heights, and next morning, after a difficult descent, they passed through mountainous forests to a small but rapid river in a narrow ravine, with immense sandstone rocks on each side; after crossing it eleven times, they by a narrow pass reached the station of *Bucaron*, surrounded by high mountains. Next morning passing up a deep glen, the road broken up and full of holes, where they sunk to the knees in mud, they passed over the height, but found a mountain-stream on the other side so swollen by the mighty rains, that they were forced to retrace their steps to Bucaron. Next day, passing this stream, they ascended a succession of hills and mountains, by a path sometimes winding, and at others in

a perpendicular direction; and, crossing the river no less than thirty-one times, reached the station of *Atrass*. Next morning they again repeatedly crossed the river, and passed over a high ridge to St Juans, a place consisting of about fifty bamboo huts. They next day crossed the river three times, and from a high mountain had the first view of the Pacific. Resting another night on the ground, they passed through woods, swamps, meadows, and savannahs, to the city of Panama. The other route from Porto Bello, by the river Chagre to Cruces and Panama, notwithstanding the difficulty of propelling boats against the rapid current of the river to Cruces, presents fewer difficulties, and is better adapted for the conveyance of goods, especially from the Pacific to the side of the Atlantic.—Weatherhead's "Account of the Expedition against the Isthmus of Darien." Longman & Co., 1821.

Note III. page 58.

An English sailor, who, in the year 1730, sojourned a few days at the Spanish village of Chiriqui, on the side of the Pacific, thus describes an incursion of the Valientes. "During my residence at the Governor's house, and at a time when I lay dangerously ill of a fever, came a company of roving Indians into the town, and plundered it of much riches. The inhabitants being few in number, and unprepared to receive an enemy, were under the necessity of submitting to whatever was imposed on them; and after they had ravaged the town as they thought fit, they committed one of the most outrageous cruelties that could possibly enter into the heart of man. There was but one clergyman in the town, who was a Spaniard, and of the order of St Francis; him they seized on, and put to death." In the midst of his torments they said, "that this was but a small revenge for the torrent of Indian blood heretofore spilled by the Spaniards. With the deplorable catastrophe of this unhappy gentleman their fury ceased: and they attempted to put no other person to death, but declared, had they met more Spaniards in the town, they would have served them all in the same manner. After this, the enemy, being in number between two and three hundred, (men and women), came to the Governor's house, which was no better prepared to receive them than the rest of the people; and when they had ransacked the

greatest part of it, and taken out such things as they liked best, they at last came into the room where I lay sick, and the first question they asked me was, what countryman I was? I quickly answered an Englishman, taken by Spanish pirates, and cruelly used by them; and was now waiting for an opportunity to get home to my own country. They assured me they would do me no injury; but, on the contrary, if I would put myself under their protection, and go along with them, they would do me all the service in their power, and would furnish me with all manner of things necessary towards forwarding my getting home, which I might do with greater ease and expedition by their means, than any other way I could propose: for they were Indians that inhabited on the North Sea, where vessels frequently arrived from Jamaica to trade with them; they had some knowledge of the English, and loved them very well, though they abhorred the Spaniards; and as they had never yet been conquered by them, they were determined utterly to defy them, and all their adherents." The murder of the priest, frightened the sailor too much to trust himself with them, and they marched off with their plunder without opposition.—*Cockburn's Narrative.*

Note IV., page 143.

"It is not doubted," (says Mr Rodgers, in a letter to the President of the Antiquarian Society of London, read April 6th 1780), "that the natives had formerly many arts among them, which have been lost for several centuries, and even known to have existed by tradition only, and by a few specimens still scattered in the interior, and, at present, uncultivated parts of the district." An intelligent gentleman acquainted with their language, "had the curiosity, under their direction, to take a journey into the interior parts of the country of seventy or eighty miles; and, guided by them, he found, on digging, many curious pieces of antiquity, but most of them too massive to be removed: and, amongst the rest, a prodigious quantity of such masques as are here exhibited, which his Indian conductors told him were the likenesses of chiefs, or other eminent persons, who had been formerly buried there, and that it was their custom to mix gold-dust with the clay of these portraits, which were, in general, heads or busts only, and often entire figures. These were placed at the heads

of the deceased, whose bodies were enclosed in a fine earth of red porcelain elegantly engraved. One thing is observable, that the present race of natives have not the least knowledge of the art of making these masques; nor of forming a composition which is likewise found with them, or near the places where they are discovered, and which is so hard, that no tool, how finely soever tempered, will make the least impression on it.

To the above account may be added, that one of these pieces is an entire foot, which, if it were Roman, would be called a votive foot; another is a head with swollen eyes and nose, and a sore crown, which would likewise be thought votive of a person recovered of these disorders, and a third represents two children who died young.

Many of these Terra Cottas, have their backs concaved, by which we may imagine they are parts of sepulchral urns, if we had any authority for such a supposition. Several of these masques are evidently of faces tatoo'd, a practise long disused on the Shore."

These masques were brought from the Mosquito Shore, about the year 1775.—*Vide Archæologia, vol. 6th p.* 107.

Note V. page 240.

A long enumeration of the articles requisite for the Indian and Central American trade, would *now* be uninteresting to the merchant as well as to the generality of readers because recent speculations and publications have given access to much information on the subject. It is, therefore, only necessary to observe, that the articles requisite for the Central States, are nearly similar to those demanded in Mexico and other parts of Spanish America. The Indians constantly require coarse linens of every kind—handkerchiefs and coarse cotton articles, chiefly showy red colours—moscheates or cutlass blades, of the best kind—spear-pointed, large clasp and table knives—felling axes, saws, locks and hinges,—nails, large needles, pins, and fish-hooks,—iron pots, frying pans, flat iron plates, and similar other articles of iron ware—tin ware for cooking, of all sorts—small glass beads of lively colours—small Dutch looking glasses. Rum is indispensable for the Indian trade—also gunpowder, muskets and fowling pieces: the New States object to the introduction of the latter articles amongst the Indians, but these people can always be supplied by the free traders.

Many other articles required by the chiefs will suggest themselves to a speculator, and it seems only requisite to observe further, that such goods as are likely to be sent into the interior, should be packed in small light cases, such as are easily moved, and not liable to be damaged by moisture.

Note VI. page 256.

A contract has recently been formed between the Government of Central America, and a company of citizens of the United States, for opening a canal through the lake of Nicaragua, the principal conditions of which are, that it shall be of such size as to admit vessels of the greatest burden possible. The Central States permit the cutting of timber necessary for the works,—furnish such surveys as have already been made on the subject—and give every facility in making new ones, and in procuring workmen. The States bind themselves to indemnify owners of lands, farms, and other property through which the canal may pass, for all damages incurred thereby. Ten per cent. interest to be paid on the capital expended by the company, who are also to receive two thirds of the duties on all vessels, goods, and produce, passing through the canal, the States to receive the other third. The Company are also to receive one half of the net proceeds of the canal, for the term of seven years, after the Central States shall have repaid them the capital and ten per cent. interest; and, to have the exclusive privilege of the navigation of the canal by steam boats, free of duties, for twenty years after its completion, with the right of fixing their own rates chargeable for freight and passage money, and the rate of compensation for towing vessels. The navigation to be open to all friendly and neutral powers. The Company are to have a preference for the supply of the castles and fortifications, to be erected on the canal, with arms, ammunition, and stores; and also, in the contracts for building and equipping vessels of war, to be kept on the Lake of Nicaragua for the protection of the canal. This contract was signed by the President of the Central States, in the month of June 1826, and has received the approbation of the Secretary of State, and of the Treasury of the United States.

Note VII. page 257.

Marcasite of gold is in the shape of little balls or nodules about the size of walnuts, nearly round, heavy and of a brown colour on the outside. The metallic stones that contain gold, generally contain antimony, vitriol, sulphur, copper, platina, or silver, and particularly the latter. The method usually employed in South America to extract the gold, is to break the metallic stones pretty small, with iron mallets. They are afterwards ground in mills, to powder, which is then passed through wire sieves, the last sieve being very fine; The coarsest particles are thrown back into the mill. The fine powder is then laid in wooden troughs with quicksilver and water, it is well kneaded, and left to saturate in the air and sun for forty-eight hours; the water is then poured off repeatedly, and the recrementitious earth is thus readily separated, leaving the gold and quicksilver amalgamated. The quicksilver is then evaporated by distillation, and the gold being fused in crucibles, is cast into plates or ingots.

Note VIII. page 266.

"Few people are acquainted with the immense size and value of some logs of mahogany brought to this country. The following may serve as an example. "The largest and finest log of mahogany ever imported into this country has been recently sold by auction at the docks in Liverpool. It was purchased by James Hodgson, Esq. for three hundred and seventy-eight pounds, and afterwards sold by him for five hundred and twenty-five pounds, and if it *open* well, it is supposed to be worth *one thousand pounds*. If sawn into vineers it is computed that the cost of labour in the process will be seven hundred and fifty pounds. The weight at the King's beam is six tons thirteen hundred weight."

Macclesfield Courier, Oct. 1823.

THE END.

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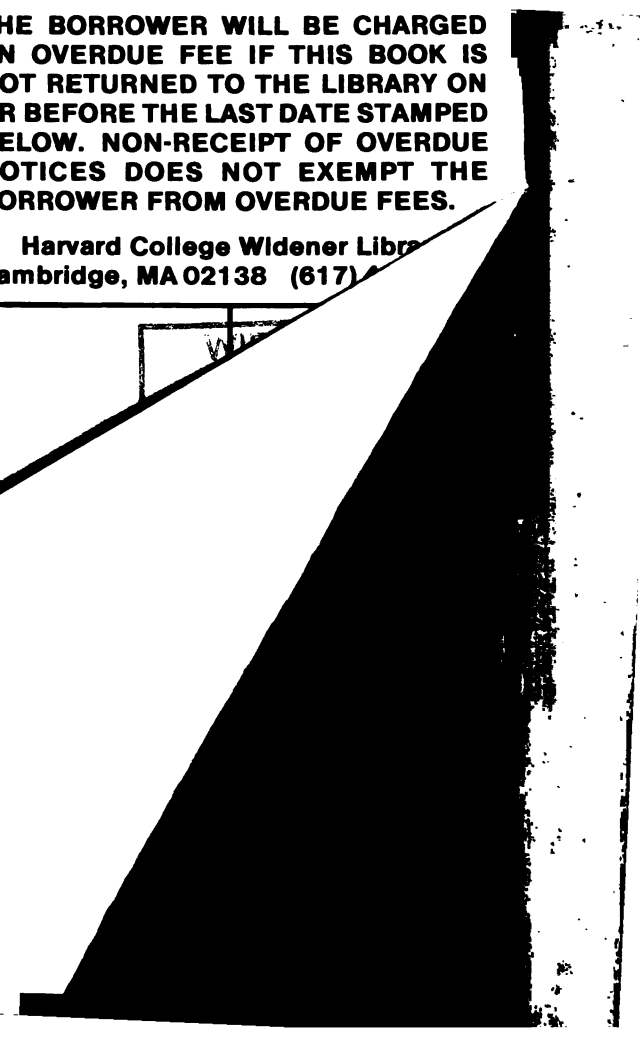

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